

A Personal History of Life in the 1900s in Hinsdale, NY

by Marjorie Witter Scott

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The following are transcripts of recordings of Marjorie Scott (Witter) produced by Tim Robinson, Dan Trail, and Sue Covello (Witter).

The tapes were digitized and preserved in digital file formats by Steve Covello and transcribed by Tim Robinson in the year 2020.

All photos from the Witter, Scott, Case, Dyer, Norton, Streeter, Jordan, Stocking, Davis, Titus, and Mayo family collections along with vintage photos of Hinsdale and Bolivar, NY have been scanned in high resolution, color corrected, retouched, and exported to JPEG for easy viewing. Many photos and segments of stories have been posted in FamilySearch.org in their respective personal records. Anyone with an interest in the photos or recordings can contact Steve Covello at weevie833@gmail.com.

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1986 - Videotape transcript

Recorded by Tim Robinson. transcribed by Tim Robinson

Marjorie Witter Scott sits perusing a reproduction 1900 Sears and Roebuck Mail order catalog. She is joined on the couch by her grandson, Timothy Robinson, who is recording the interview.

Tim: What did you find?

I'm looking at the women's styles, instead of the medicines. I can't figure how they achieved this hour-glass waist.

I've seen things where they have the laces in the back, and they get somebody to help them...

Yes, they would hook them on the bedpost, and walk away! They'd get somebody to tie it up. But my mother... she wouldn't.

Didn't believe in it?

No! It was wrong to wear a corset - lace your waist in! It was not good for your health. You were to do what's good for your health.

Was it too tight?

Yes, it pushed your organs down, and got them out of place. That was not allowed, no, not for a minute! I was not allowed a foundation garment. I was allowed a foundation garment, but not anything that would pull me in any. When I was 16, I teased and teased and teased, because the other girls had them. But finally, she gave in, but certain regulations about... 26 was my waist measure. I had a size 26, so that it couldn't be pulled in any. Very strict regulations about what I was allowed to wear.

(2:00)

Is that why ladies fainted so often back then, or didn't they, really?

Yes, yes, it was supposed to be, because your lungs were compressed too, you couldn't get a normal amount of air. You were supposed to be delicate. Not husky like I was!

(Looking at catalog) I remember how all these things were.

Did boys wear those dresses like that too?

Oh yes! Boys wore those dresses until they were... well, we had a picture of Lewis, that we had enlarged, I believe he was five. They called them kilts. They were styled a little bit different than the girls dresses. They had little pants under them, I believe, though the pants didn't show very much. They were down below the knee."

How long would a boy wear those then?

Well, till he was six or seven. My father remembered when he still wore them. I don't know if Lewis remembered or not. That picture we had showed Lewis with the kilt.

And then, what would the boy wear after that?

Oh, just straight pants. Short.

Knee pants?

Knee pants. Straight, not knickers. It was a long time before they came to knickers. And little shirts, like. And then when they got big and gangling, 13 or 14, before they had long pants. They wore just the straight pants."

Would they wear straight pants in the winter too? With leggings, or...long stockings?

Yes, everybody had leggings. You wore long underwear, then had heavy black stockings, and your shoes, and you had leggings and overshoes. So, you were well bundled up before you went out in the snow.

(4:38)

Reminds me of an incident about my sister Marian, going out in the snow. I was always husky, and loved to go out and play in the snow. I wanted her to go with me, my sister two years younger. Well, Mama got us all dressed up, and we'd go out, and I said 'Let's play Fox and Geese!', or let's do this or that, and run around in the snow. And we'd just about get out and get started to do something, and Marian would start in 'Oh, I wanna go in, I'm cold!!' And I'd be so disgusted, because she didn't stay out and play with me at all! But, she always was tender, and I was tough!

(5:35)

Is that your dad?

Tim: Yep, I think he's coming up.

(6:04)

Ralph Robinson, husband of Marjorie's daughter Thelma, enters and sits on the couch. Some explanation and discussion of how the interview will proceed.

(8:31)

Okay, I wanted to put in my philosophy, my belief, is summed up in two quotations, and that is John 3:16, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life." And it's in John and Mark 2, about Jesus' words that "The first and greatest commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all they might, with all thy mind... and thy neighbor as thyself.” That sums up my belief and philosophy.

(To Ralph Robinson). What do you think about that?

Ralph: Well, I think it's quite simple, and quite comprehensive too. As far as that goes, because there's so many things to argue about in the Bible, seems as though, but those two things there's not a lot of argument.

Well, the more things I read, the more things I see, you could take two views of it! So I just say “Stick to that!”.

What's on my mind at present is that everything is fine, really. I'm not as strong as I was, and I know I'm not going to last too long, but you take one day at a time. All of my family, I'm pleased with all of my family. They're all good to me - kind and thoughtful. God's good to me! I've nothing more to ask, just to be able to stay here in my own home, as long as possible.

(To Ralph) You tell about when you came up to the sugar bush for the first time.

The sugar bush - making maple syrup - was a big part of my life, and a big part of my grandchildren's memories. When'd you come up to the sugar bush the first time - do you remember?

Ralph: No, I... I suppose it was the first year we were married, which was back in 1943. That was in January, when we were married,

We had the evaporator then.... I'll tell a little bit about it. Always... when I was just a little bit of a girl, about five, I went with Grandpa Witter... oh, that was the joy of my life, when I went up to Grandpa Witter's farm! Anything! To go out to the barn when they milked the cows, anything about the farm. And this time was maple syrup time, and I went up with grandpa to the woods, and they were boiling. Oh, I just loved that! I was THRILLED to be out in the fresh air and sun-shiny day in the spring! So I just had the desire to make syrup, to make syrup! Papa let us tap the trees by our house in Hinsdale, and boil it on the stove. He was a little bit skeptical about it because made so much steam in the house, but we did it.

(13:00)

Well, when we bought the farm, why, there was the sugar bush, and there was old-fashioned sugar equipment! I was all thrilled! I was going to make syrup! Dick was a year and a half old. I took him up to the woods with me, a horse and wagon. We went up to the woods, I got the buckets around, and tapped a few trees. It was an open fire and a pan, to boil, and I made SOME syrup. There was a drum for gathering, well I used one drum and gathered in, and I put Dick in another drum, laid down on its side. And I took blankets and things, and made him a bed, inside of that drum. So, he could have is nap and sleep and so forth, and I gathered up sticks around the woods - those that I could break up - and I made some syrup. So that was the first year. That would have been 1927. So I kept on - Miner helped me, more or less, but it was MY project always. I was the one that loved to do it.

1940, we bought the Arch, we got flat pans that could be drained. We got better equipment, anyway. We could really make some worthwhile syrup! I had to take it down to the house, always, to cleanse it at first. And then, later, we got the good big evaporator. We made quite a little. I had different helpers. And we had a little cupboard in the corner, we had dishes and equipment. We cooked meals under the firebox, down underneath - an iron skillet with a cover. My grandchildren always loved to come up - well, my brothers and sisters too. It was something, to come up to the sugar bush. We had many, many good times up there, and we wrote all over the walls, different things, different dates. The last time I was up there, I could still read and remember different things that we wrote up on the walls. Well, I guess that's enough about making maple syrup. Shall I go on to my beef cattle?

Tim: There's one thing I remember about the sugar bush - baking potatoes in the coals, wrapping them up in tinfoil and throwing them in, and that's what we'd get to eat.

We'd wrap up potatoes and put them in the ashes to cook, and put other things in the skillet to cook, the iron skillet, and put the cover over it. You had that iron skillet up to the cabin. It went through the fire.

Tim: When your house burned... Weren't you up at the sugar bush when your house burned?

Yes. I had done up the work and gone up - we were just startup up the fire. David was with me - we were just starting up the fire and we hear this toot on the automobile horn, and I said "Well, it's something...", looked down and we could see the smoke. Well, I had a pretty good idea - you couldn't see the house, but I knew it was right where the house was... the smoke was coming up. So David ... we had horses ... part of the time, we had to use horses and a sled, most of the time through the years we used the horses and sled to gather sap. And David fixed the horses behind the sled with hay to eat so they'd stay still, and he started down. And I was opening up the fire, starting it up, and I thought "Well, if the house is afire, there's no use burning up the sugar or the syrup" so I stayed and shut the fire down, and left it so it was safe to leave, and I went down. And David when he went, it seemed like, when he went, he took one jump and down the hill, and it seemed like he went about a rod at each jump! ...going down, and I followed, more leisurely.

(18:44)

The house was all afire. That was a very, of course, traumatic experience. I thought we could get in the dining room door - the fire was over the kitchen, where it was coming out the kitchen window. I thought maybe we could get into the dining room. Fred Gile was there when we got down there. He went with me to the door to see, and he reached in and got a bridge lamp with an iron standard that stood there, and Alvey Miller, his hired man grabbed out a Morris chair - like an easy chair - that I'd gotten Miner for Christmas. And we shut the door right back up - it was full of black smoke - and the bridge lamp was so hot that it burned his hand to a blister, pulling it out. So I said "Well, it wasn't afire around by the bedroom". I went around there to see, I thought maybe, if I can get in the bedroom window I can get my clothes, and there was money, and my jewelry and things on the bureau if I can get in that bedroom window. Henry Hurlburt stood there, and he said "Well, I don't think you can!" but I wanted to try, so I went

around. And there was water in the ditch there, and I thought, well if I had something, and wet a cloth to put over my nose, but I was dressed in clothes that Dick had had in the Army, I didn't have a thing, like a slip or anything that I could get a piece of to wet. And the window was high enough up, I had to be boosted up to get in, and I said "No...". Well, they advised me against it, they said "No, there's no use of trying...". So I couldn't get in.

(20:55)

So I went out and stood in the garden, and watched it burn. Oh, I went around behind. They got the boys - Giles had seen the... they had tooted the horn. Fred and Alvey went down... Bertha had called down to school. There was no fire protection in Hinsdale then, or not up our way anyway, nothing could come up there. She called school, and they sent all the boys that were big enough to be of help to come up. Dick was in school, and oh, he heard it over the loudspeaker! "Scott's house is on fire, and any boys that are big enough to be of help are excused to go up and help" So he was with the boys that came up. But they couldn't do anything - they went in the cellar and got some canned fruit, and oh, they got the - Miner came along sometime about then from the mail route. He would come down from the mail route to pick up some eggs for somebody over town, and Dick's lunch for school. He got the tractor that was in the cellar, the garage under the house. He got the tractor out. And some fruit out. And then the fire dropped down, from the kitchen, so they didn't get anything more out from the cellar.

Then I went out and stood in the garden and watched it burn. Fred Gile stood beside me, and it broke through the roof. I had hung my clothes in the attic to dry, and a bright pink double-bed blanket, outing flannel bed blanket, came up through the roof and waved in the air. And that was it, there wasn't any use to staying there any longer. Fred said "Well, come on up to the house, it isn't any use standing here any longer." So I went up, and we stayed with Giles for three or four days, till we got somewhere else to stay. Well, that's about the house burning.

(23:56)

I guess I'll tell about the beef cattle next. Well, we kept the dairy cows through World War II, in case one of the boys wanted to stay on the farm, but then, after, Miner was older - harder for him to do the work - and the boys, didn't either one of them want to stay there, and he didn't have help like he had. First, he depended on Howard for help, and then on Dave and Dick as they grew along up, so he sold the dairy, but he kept one cow for our use, and raised veal calves too, some, so we had some use for the hay. Well, one Sunday morning I was listening to the radio and I heard about this man, out at the Lawtons, had his beef cattle. Well, I got the idea then - beef cattle. It was the thing to do. Beef cattle - let them eat the hay, and we didn't have to milk them all the time. So every time I'd see beef cattle, I wanted to stop and look at them, and ask about them. So we investigated. I was the one that was interested and wanted to do it, but Miner was willing to cooperate with me.

So we eventually, we bought four Herefords, and we went on and built up the herd - got good registered sires, and I had the herd of about twenty brood cows, and I was just so happy taking care of those cows. One I named Betty - oh, just a pet. I'd go out in the pasture and say "Here

Betty! Here Betty!" and she'd come to me and I'd pet her and give her some feed. I just thoroughly enjoyed them! At one time I enjoyed my chickens, too! That was back through the years, but I gave up the chickens because I didn't have a chicken house - hen house. But the beef cattle, we went on and built the pole shed and developed quite a business out of it. And then when we came to sell them - Miner was retiring and we wanted to go to Florida and visit relatives in Florida, we got a good price for them. We got a good price for the calves that year, and that gave us a nice little nest egg. So we went on. We were financially very comfortable - we had his pension after that.

(27:39)

Well, what else do you want to hear about?

Tim: What trips did you take?

Marjorie: Well, let me think, if anything special... oh, Howard was the first child... I nearly died when he was born, but I didn't. The Witter family reunion was important in my life. That was the big event in June, and Christmas, the two big events in the year that we went by - and I knew all my cousins, and that was important, the Witter family reunion. It was at different cousins' houses different times. And in 1910 it was at Volney Scott's house, and we went on the train. When it was in Cuba we drove horses, the family, but that year we went on the train. And it would be Miner's father, or Miner, that met the different trains, and took the people where they were going. I was going to go and visit Ada Kellogg, so I went there and went up to their house. But that day - I had noticed these older boys and older girls, the year before, that - it was in Cuba - they went and got ice cream, and I thought well that would be nice, if I was only big enough - that Betsy Jordan and the girls that I went around with - that we could go down and get ice cream with the boys. That would be pretty nice! But I wasn't old enough yet. But then the next year, well, Miner was there. He saw me and liked me right away. We played croquet a long time, and Hazel was one of the older girls, and I got acquainted with her that day, and after I'd stayed a day or two over at Ada Kellogg, well Hazel invited me up to her house, to visit her. We used to visit around among the cousins a lot. So, I was up to Hazel's for three or four days, and got better acquainted with Miner. So at Thanksgiving, Hazel came down to visit me. He wished he'd been invited to go to, but he wasn't. I didn't have any special thoughts about him, as yet. And then, in June, after the next reunion, Hazel and he came with the horse and buggy down to Hinsdale to visit. Well, that... he came, after that, regularly. I was 17 then. So that's about how that went.

(31:36)

We were engaged before we went to school at Alfred. I was going to go to school, I had my mind made up I was going to go to Alfred. My father didn't really agree to it - he thought I should get a job and work and be self-supporting, I was through high school. But my mother said she thought the attitude my father had taken about his younger sister, and her education, that if she'd really wanted - she didn't go to high school, she just went to country school and then quit. My father had gone to high school - he went to high school in Olean, and walked for a long distance to get there - and he remarked about his sister, that she could have gotten an

education if she wanted to. He was a little bit disgusted with her. So Mama encouraged me, that Papa would stand behind me, if I went on and determined to go to Alfred to school.

So I did, and well, a happenstance, my Aunt Ruby lived with us, and a man came along, and nobody was home but me, and Grandma Witter. This man came along, looking for Aunt Ruby. He wanted to find somebody to be an agent for Maclean and Black Company to sell jewelry, silverware, some kitchen utensils - aluminum ware.

(33:25)

Aluminum cookware was something new at the time. Well, it was \$5 for the kit, and he went on and sold it to me. Miner had asked me - I'd gone to Hornell Fair with Miner the week before, and Papa had given me \$5 for pocket money to go to the fair, in case I wanted to be independent, I'd have some money of my own in my pocket. But I hadn't spent any - we went on the train, and back on the train. So I had the five dollars - it was five dollars for this kit, so I said "All right, I'll take the kit." So I bought the kit, and I started out selling silverware and aluminum cooking utensils. So I worked from Cuba, and I worked - I worked the rest of the summer - part of the time, at least - and saved my money, and went to Alfred to school.

Miner went to school also. But, he wasn't going to take any chances on what I was going to do after I got to Alfred. He persisted. I was a little bit hesitant, but he persisted... and I said "All right, I will promise to marry you." So I was engaged, and he got an opal ring. I said "No, not a diamond, that's too expensive." So he got an opal engagement ring. And we went to Alfred. So then, there was one man there was married. His wife lived there - they had rooms there in Alfred. He was taking the course in Ag school. That gave Miner the idea that we could be married. So we were married that next summer, when I was just 18, and went back to school married. Rented two rooms up in the third story of a house. First year I lived in The Brick, the dormitory. We rented rooms upstairs, and kept house. So that went on. I won't tell about going to Friendship.

(36:26)

I was going to tell about the children. Well, Howard was the first one and was very precious of course. I was anxious, anxious to have a baby. So he was most welcome. He wasn't quite as welcome with Miner, he.... well, I won't say much about that.... he'd rather have me all to himself. But, he made the best of it. And then I was so bad, with the convulsions - eclampsia they called it - albumin in my urine when he was born. So the doctor said I shouldn't have any more for a few years. So, it was not quite two years when Thelma was born. Oh, she was a girl, and I was just so delighted! And I took SO much pleasure in dressing her, and making her clothes, crocheting and tatting and embroidery on her clothes. She was such a joy, such a pleasure to me! And I used to call her Little Bright Eyes, because she would notice things! If you couldn't think where something was, we'd ask her "Did you see it?" "Oh yes! I know!" and she'd run right and get it, time and again! Something that had been maybe mislaid or something. So we called her Little Bright Eyes.

And I taught her, when she was old enough, I taught her out of the primer and taught her to read, and we'd act out little things in the reading book. Oh, that's just one of the HAPPIEST times in my life, is Thelma before she went to school. Annabelle came along later, but I lost Annabelle just before she was a year old. I took so much pleasure, just being a housewife and a mother. Washing their clothes - I had Howard that was five, and Thelma that was two, and Annabelle only a baby. No Thelma was a year and a half - she was coming two in October that summer. And I washed and ironed their little dresses, and every day after lunch, after dinner, I'd dress them all three up, dress them up in clean clothes, and we'd go up - I had a goat cart for Annabelle, and a little two-wheeled cart with quite a long handle that Thelma sat in and Howard pulled her - and we'd go uptown and see my mother, every afternoon that was nice. That was just a very, very happy time! I was just so happy with those three children and took such pleasure in dressing them up and all.

(40:29)

And then, when Thelma was old enough - well, I did become concerned about her, because she didn't talk. When she was coming almost three, she didn't talk very much. She'd say "Aw dessd up, go sho Sate!". Kate was our next door neighbor, and that was "I'm all dressed up, I'll go show Kate!" was about the extent of her vocabulary, where Howard had talked sentences and knew all about things and showed that he knew all about things. So I said to my mother, "I don't know - she doesn't talk like Howard did. I don't know what to think." And my father said, "Well, you know, I didn't talk until I was past three years old, and now look at me." Because he was a traveling salesman, and that's how he earned his living, by talking! So that concern - she turned out to be just as smart as Howard was. But I enjoyed teaching her at home. We'd act out little things in the book about a bird. She'd jump up on a chair and then wave her arms and jump down and fly - she was a bird flying down. A very, very happy time!

(42:00)

And then the years went by. After Annabelle died in the flu, 1919, I felt that we couldn't afford any more children. Finances were pretty tight - Miner got the mail route, but his pay was just \$100 a month, no equipment maintenance, nothing else at all, no promise of pension even, although he was sure they were GOING to get all these things. It was a good job, working for the government. I was discouraged that summer. I just couldn't - he'd had his appendicitis operation, Annabelle had been born, we were behind, and in debt - I just said "I can't make it! You'll have to" - this was 1919, and war wages, people were getting big wages working in the railroad shops, or different things for the war effort. I just said "I can't do it! You'll have to get a different job." Miner said "No, we're going to get a raise in pay. We're going to get pensions. It's worth sticking to." Well of course he was absolutely right, it was WELL worth sticking to. So he stuck to it, and I did the best I could. And we came through that.

I LONGED for another baby after Annabelle died, but I thought we shouldn't have till we got straightened around financially. So then it was 1923, four years later, that David came, and he was most, most welcome. He was most, most welcome, very, very much cherished, and I was happy with him - made his clothes and enjoyed him so much. And then Dick happened along,

rather unexpectedly! But when I first saw him, I looked over at him, he had his thumb in his mouth already, sucking away, and he was so white and pretty!

(44:51)

Howard was a red baby, red as a beet. And Thelma was dark, and David was dark, and then Dick was pink and white and pretty, so, then I thought "Well, he's wonderful too!" Happy. Well, that's what he was.

Well, that's about my children. I can't think of anything else...

(48:15).

We're going through the book Grandma's Story, a series of questions, answered by Marjorie.

My Baby Days

Grandma, were you born around here?

I was born June 16, 1894, up on Congress Street in Hinsdale.

I was a fat baby, placid, breast fed. Placid - almost phlegmatic, I was.

When I was a Little Girl

What kind of games did you play?

Pussy Wants a Corner, tag, Tic-Tac-Toe, Needles Eye, croquet, paper dolls, we built leaf houses, Old Maid, Flinch, tiddle-winks.

What were your favorite toys?

I was the first of my schoolmates to receive a bicycle. A bisque doll with real hair and a kid body. My cloth doll, named Kate, with whom I slept until I was 16, when she vanished. That's important about Kate. She was something like the Cabbage Patch dolls nowadays, made out of cloth, and features painted on. Not as realistic as the Cabbage Patch dolls, but oh how I loved her. I took her everywhere, and still slept with her when I was 16, and I went off to Friendship to visit Hazel, and when I came home, she was gone! I always kept her on my bed, but when I came home she was gone! I never knew what happened to her, but I suspect my brother Lewis thought 'twas time to dispose of her! But I missed her! ...now I let my cat Prince get in bed with me, and I hug him!

(50:45)

Did the boys tease you?

From five to eight years, Robbins Pierce was my chief playmate. We played house, school and train. When he was Father, and I was busy getting my meal on the table, on our side porch, he sat there with a paper, supposed to be reading, and I kept asking him something, and he looked

up and said "Keep still!! Can't you see that I'm reading?" He couldn't read! But that was his idea of being a father!

Were there trains and automobiles? Did you ride street cars and buses?

We rode trains. The Erie and the Pennsy. Streetcars in Olean. The Glade House was the hotel, almost across the road from our house, and they had a bus, drawn by two horses that met all the trains, and John Idle was the driver of that, from the station to the post office. And they would go for sleigh rides in the winter time in the bus. For ten cents, they'd take you to Olean and back on a sleigh ride.

Did you have ice cream? Could you buy it for a penny or a nickel?

We had homemade ice cream, and occasionally we went to The Sugar Bowl in Olean, and that was a great treat! That was an occasion - to go in there with the metal chairs, and the glass topped tables and all in The Sugar Bowl and get an ice cream or ice cream sundae. For a nickel, you could get a bag of chocolates or peach stones - a sort of tart candy. And later, you could get an ice cream cone for a nickel.

Did you go swimming? Where? Who with?

We did not go swimming, but we did go in the brook up on the farm with my sister Marian or sometimes Aunt Ruby. That's what I loved - anything up on the farm, I loved! Especially to play in the brook, and go fishing! Oh yes, I loved to go fishing. Grandma gave me a piece of string and a crooked pin, and I got some angleworms, and went out and sat on a big stone in the creek and a little fish about four or five inches long would come out. I caught one one day, with my crooked pin and string. I took it home, and Grandma cleaned it for me, and I took it home to show Mama, and she fried it! A little minnie!

Did you ever have stitches or broken bones?

Yes, I had stitches taken. I was about 13 or 14, and I fell on the ice. I loved to skate to, and we skated on ponds near our house, and I fell and got a cut over my eye, quite a gash, and went up into the house, and Mama tried, but she couldn't get it stopped bleeding. So she put an ice pack on it, and I walked up the street to Dr. Jury's office, and went in, and he sewed it up for me, and I walked back home again. He thought that was something - a girl 13 or 14 come walking up the street by herself, have her eye sewed up, ...and go home again!

What kind of house did you grow up in, Grandma?

The first house was my Grandpa Norton's house, where I was born, up on Congress Street. That was a big house, Grandma and Grandpa Norton had one part of it, was her part, separate. Then we lived at the Madison place, down on the flat just one summer, we had the whooping cough there. Then we moved into my grandfather's house in Hinsdale, right on Main Street, between two stores. And then, when I was 12, we bought the house down next to, well, what's now the Hotel. It WAS the Methodist Parsonage. I have many memories of all the different houses.

Did you have an attic or a basement?

We had a basement in the house where we lived after I was 12. Basement with a cement floor, and in one corner was the cistern. The stairs went down, and even though I was 12 years old, I imagined there was something under those stairs. When I'd go down after the potatoes, I'd get down all right, but then when I went back up I imagined there was a troll or something under the stairs that was going to grab my feet, so I'd hustle up the stairs as fast as I could go! Our Golden Text one Sunday was "If God be for you, who can be against you?!" So I'd hustle up the stairs and say "If God be for you, who can be against you! If God be for you, who can be against you!" and I'd get safely up to the top of the stairs. I was really too big for that, but that's the way I still was.

(57:30)

Who lived with you?

Well that's important. That's my great-grandma Norton, my mother's maternal grandmother. She's very much part of my life from my earliest recollections. She was with us until she died in June, 1911, just the time I graduated, before or just after my graduation in June. She could remember way back when, and told us about her mother coming from Westover, Massachusetts, and before she died she was nearly blind, and very hard of hearing. But she still could if we spoke real loud. And she was literary, very literary. We took the Ladies Home Journal and The Saturday Evening Post. They had continued stories in them, and I would read to her, and we just couldn't wait for the next part of the continued stories to come. I remember thinking about it in school - "Well, The Ladies Home Journal should come today, and I'll read that story to Grandma when I get home tonight." And the same with the Youth's Companion. It was good for me, and she enjoyed it! It was what's important.

I never knew of her doing any work. I can remember before 1900, her living with us. She was born in 1820, so she would have been 80 in 1900, but she didn't stay active like women do now. She just lived with us, and took the babies on her lap, and rocked them to sleep and amused us children, and things like that, but was not active in the household life.

Grandma, do you remember your first Christmas?

I was three years old. I had a new coat and bonnet. We attended the Christmas Tree at the church. We always had a Christmas tree at the Methodist church - always went to the Methodist church for Sunday school. Arriving home, Nellie, that's my foster sister took me with the lantern to the old outside toilet. I remember concern for my coat. I found a finger ring with three little sets in my stocking the next morning. I believe a china headed doll also. That's my first Christmas recollection. I was just so concerned about that new coat. It was - my mother's wedding dress was wool, white wool material. She'd worn it for graduation from Olean High School, and then dyed it blue, and made it over, and trimmed it with red ribbons, into a coat and bonnet for me. And that was something, that coat and bonnet!

(1:02:15)

Did you hang stockings and decorate the tree?

We always hung stockings up. Our trees were from the local fields. Sometimes Uncle Jay would bring one. As we grew older, we would go with Papa to find it. We strung cranberries and popcorn and decorated it. And we were not allowed to believe in Santa Claus. My mother had believed in Santa Claus, and then it was a great shock to her when she found out there wasn't any Santa Clause, so she wouldn't let us believe in Santa Claus. She said "Well, that's just your father and mother."

Did you go to your Grandma's for Thanksgiving?

Yes, we went to Grandma Witter's up on the farm, and we always were hoping that there'd be enough snow, so Grandpa would come after us with the bobsled instead of with the wagon. We didn't have turkey in those days. Turkeys were expensive to buy, so we had chicken.

Did you trick-or-treat on Halloween?

No. We didn't do anything of that sort. We wouldn't have been allowed to - I don't think other children did back then. We invited some of our friends in, and we bobbed for apples, and we did magic tricks - to peel an apple with the peel all in one piece, and swing it over your head, and flip it down on the ground, and what letter it made, that was who you was going to marry! Things like that is what we did. Oh yes! And then we had the Halloween Hunts. They were an institution in Hinsdale for many, many years! Probably, I think maybe fifty years, because it was before my time.

(1:04:27)

The women would hide in groups anywhere in the village limits. And then they were to ask the men to hunt them. But you didn't have your own husband hunt you, not usually. You asked some other man. Well then, the women would be in groups. Of course, two women would ask somebody else whose husband would be in the same group. They had one hour the church bell - it was put on by the Ladies Aid or the ?? League. The church bell would ring at 7 o'clock, and they started hunting. You had to be hid before 7 o'clock. At 7 o'clock they started hunting and hunted until 8, and if they found you, then the women had to pay for the men's supper, you went up to the church and had the supper, and the women had to pay for the men's. And if they didn't find you, the men had to pay for the women's supper. We started hiding when I was probably 13 or 14. I know I hid when I was 14, I remember that very well. 12 or 13 we started getting a bunch together and hiding. Well, all those places - people had attics with a concealed place to get into, and we'd find out the different houses in town where you could hide. Out in our house, down by the parsonage, you could take up boards in the floor of the woodshed and go under the house, and then put the boards back down and you wouldn't ever know it. Different ones hid back in there sometimes, and secret entrances to attics. And oh what a thrill! You'd hear them hunting, and talking right around near you, and you'd just hold your breath! You didn't dare hardly breath! Sometimes I was found, and sometimes I wasn't. That was an event that was carried on, down to about, way almost up to about 1950. The last time I remember hiding - I don't know where we hid - but it was after David and Audrey were married, and

Audrey's father hunted me and Miner hunted Audrey's mother. And that would be... they were married in '46? So it's almost 1950 that those hunts were kept on, and they might have had one after that. I don't remember hiding after that. But it was quite a thing in Hinsdale.

Well, we'll see what's next.

Did the boys send you cards or candies on Valentine's day?

We had a Valentine box at school into which we put homemade valentines for distribution, mostly girls to girls and boys to boys. I never remember receiving candy for Valentine's Day. And I'm going to add right here that last year was the first year that I got a real valentine, a REAL valentine. And that was from Bill. And I was really thrilled by it. And I said to David - I guess it was when he came to take me for groceries - I said "I got a real valentine, a REAL valentine, the first real valentine I ever got!" And he said "Didn't Dad ever give you a valentine?" And I said "No." Miner was strictly practical, not romantic in any way. "Valentine! Pooh! Just a waste of money!" He didn't go for things like that!

School Days

Well, I always loved school. It was always easy for me. I went into second grade when I went to school. Mama taught me at home, so I went into the second grade. I went to second and third grade, and started the fourth grade to Nellie Green, the same teacher. The first four grades were in the primary room. And then the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th in the intermediate room, and then the high school. There were just three rooms, three teachers in the school, and it was a big white colonial style school house up where the fire hall is now. And had the hall above it where we had all kinds of public meetings like a town hall. I went to Nellie Green in the 2nd, 3rd, and part of 4th, and then I think the Intermediate teacher resigned for some reason or other, so then they put Nellie Green to teach the intermediate room and hired Louise Wiley to teach the primary room. So I had Louise Wiley for part of the fourth grade, and then went into the fifth grade, and that was Nellie Green. Fifth grade and sixth grade to Nellie Green.

Then at the end of the 6th grade - well Nellie Green was a rusher, she always pushed her pupils. At the end of the sixth grade, well, you could take Regents whenever the teacher said you could, so she let her sixth grade pupils take the Geography examination - we had finished our Geography book - and she said "Well, you can take the Geography examination." So I passed that - I think most of us passed the Geography examination. The day of the English Regents examination - these were Regents examinations - she said "Would you like to take this English examination?" "Oh," I said, "yes, I will." So I took the English examination. I hadn't had 7th and 8th grade English but I'd been in the room and listened to them. They'd read Lady of the Lake. I did not know my grammar - what would be 7th and 8th grade grammar - but I passed the Regents English, and then she said "Well, you might as well take the Reading and Writing and the rest of them - the Arithmetic - so I took the rest of them and I had the ruling that if you only lacked one or two preliminary subjects, if you'd failed two of your subjects you could still go sit in high school and go back to the intermediate room for the subjects that you lacked. So when I was 12 I went into high school. But I was young, of course, too young, and I couldn't grasp a lot of things. For instance, we read Ivanhoe, and when Rebekah stood on the turret

defying Bryan de Bois Gilbert I didn't know what it was all about! I didn't know why she was out there on the turret!

(1:14:00)

I was 13 when I took Geometry, and that was beyond me, and I'd stand at the blackboard beside of Herman Raub, who'd come back to school because he was engaged to be married to a high school graduate, the minister's daughter. He wanted a little more education himself. I stood up to the blackboard beside of him - I remember as well as can be - trying to prove a proposition on the board. I couldn't. I just couldn't! And I looked over at him, and he wrote it right off, you know. It came to me, in the spring, a little bit before I was 14. I got so I knew what it was about. The day I was fourteen, I had three Regents examinations: Advanced Arithmetic, Geometry, and Second Year English. And the Advanced Arithmetic and Geometry both came in the forenoon. I got my Advanced Arithmetic done all right, and the Geometry I had written out on scrap paper but I didn't have time to copy it - they had to come and take the paper away from me. So I failed - that's the only examination I ever failed. I did not get a passing mark on that, so I went on and took it and passed it the next year. Then I understood it!

(1:15:39)

But Mama held me back - I didn't take a full load of subjects. You were supposed to take four subjects, but I usually took three, so I didn't have homework to do. I got my state diploma in January, 1911. That was four years since I'd really been in high school, but I didn't graduate until June 1911. I had extra counts then, when I graduated. Well, that's about my school days.

When I was seven, my people took me to the PanAmerican, and I remember quite a lot about that. I remember the Electric Tower, and sitting on the bank and watching the fireworks - oh beautiful figures that did the action - Uncle Sam and something, and I remember the Indian Village - a lot of things I remember about the PanAmerican. My people always wanted us children to have advantages of education and culture and so forth. They wanted us to have the best that we could possibly afford.

And then about going up to Niagara Falls, when I was ten, they thought it would be nice - my father was a traveling salesman, and he was working in Erie County, and Mama's sister-in-law, Aunt Nell, lived in Buffalo and we visited her every now and then, and they visited us. That was an important part of our life, those Buffalo cousins. And so they made arrangements that Marian and I would go up on the train, and Papa would meet us in Buffalo on Friday afternoon, and then he would take us to Niagara Falls. We'd see downtown Buffalo, and then he would take us to Niagara Falls the next day. So we went up, and Papa met us, and we went to Aunt Nell's for supper, and then we got on the street car and rode downtown, all around downtown, to see the electric signs. We'd never seen anything like that, you know, that was something, to see those electric signs, and the bright lights on the streets of downtown Buffalo. So we rode around on the streetcar downtown, all around, and then back home. And got up Saturday morning and went to Niagara Falls. We went on the Gorge Route, it was famous at that time. It went down in the canyon, down in beside the falls, and in by the Maid of the Mist. It was a streetcar, electric car, and it went way up to Brock's Monument in Canada and circled around. It

took most of the day. Well, we had our dinner before we went on that. We went around some and saw the falls from the American side, and then we had our dinner.

Well that was my first experience at - Marian too - our first experience at a hotel, and that I well remember. We could look at the menu, and ordered whatever we wanted, and well, we didn't... it was hard to decide what we wanted, all those delicious things listed there. And Marian had the most trouble about what she was going to have for desert! So she finally decided to have ice cream, and apple pie, and seems as though something else. So Papa said "Well all right, if that's what you want." So he said to the waitress "Just bring her a small amount." Well then, she couldn't eat up all the desert after she got it.

(1:21:16)

But that was an experience. And then we went on the Gorge Route. Papa bought fruit. We had fruit to eat out of hand while we rode around. We stopped at different stations. On the Canadian side we did the Canadian falls - the Horseshoe Falls, we stopped at Brock's Monument. I can't remember, but there were four or five different stops, and stay at that station till the next train came along, 15 minutes or whatever. That was an educational experience, one that I well remember.

How old were you before you could date? Who was your first date?

My mother's rule was No Dating before 18 years. I was allowed to go to a Sunday School class party, my first evening party at 12, with George Maxwell.

What were your slumber parties like?

We didn't call them slumber parties, but we stayed all night with different girlfriends, and they stayed with us, and we usually talked most of the night, and giggled and so forth!

Who was your favorite boyfriend?

At sweet 16, it was Dean Gamble. Four boys and four girls, chaperoned by two schoolteachers, were invited to Johnson's cottage at Cuba Lake for a week, and we had a hilarious time! Like later slumber parties. Dean was paired with me.

What did you and your best friend use to do?

Elodine Swarts and I kept diaries together, part in German, rode horseback, walked to and from school with Edward Kent. That was when I was 14. Sometimes went riding with the horse and buggy. Both our fathers had horses. We also went fishing. Easter vacation 1910 I visited Hazel Scott and Miner started paying attention to me. When I came home, Kate my cloth doll was missing.

Did you have your own car, or ever go to the drive-in?

I think there were just two cars in Hinsdale when I was 16. We went to the movies in Olean by train, only in the daytime, with girls. No dating or regular boyfriends or beaus.

What was your nickname?

Fannie Wood called me Pudgie - guess why!

What used to make you mad?

I seldom got mad, more often hurt. I did not like to be called fat.

My next is when Grandpa came a-courting. I told enough about that, I guess.

Discussion of photographs follows

1918 or 1919 - did I have a baby on my lap?

Tim: Thelma.

Then that was 1919 - she was three, after Annabelle died. That's what I was thinking, 1919. That was Labor Day, 1919, out at Ithaca.

Tim: You and all your family are on the porch of your house in Hinsdale.

Yes.. On the side porch. Yes. Well, Howard was a baby, Howard's in my lap.

Tim: How did that happen to be taken?

There was a Brother, a Russelite Brother, a young man, a son of a minister, I think of a Methodist minister, but he had taken up Russelism. I don't know how he happened to be around the country, if he was selling books... anyway, he was visiting at my father's house, and he had a camera, and liked to take pictures. So he was there, over Sunday at my father's house, and well he was up to my house

This traveling photographer came along, and wanted to take a picture of the whole family, out in the front yard, and so we went out, just the way we were, and the part I always remember about myself, I had my sleeves rolled up, and they were all wrinkled around, but I pulled them down to look more respectable in the picture, and the wrinkles show where they're all wrinkled up! And my brother Nelson is on his little handcart. Well, he's there with his hair rumped up, just the way he came with his bicycle. They were out, Lewis with his bicycle, and Nelson with his handcart. They came, just as they were, and Marian, and Grandma Norton in her wrapper - she always wore a wrapper - I can just see it so plain! All lined up out in the yard, and had our picture taken. And then my sister Marian, we had one or two of the pictures, my sister Marian had one, and she had copies made, several years later, and gave each one of us a copy.

1989 - Audiotape #2

Recorded by Marjorie Scott, transcribed by Tim Robinson

I always loved to walk over hill and dale, especially in the woods. My chief interest in hunting was contact with the deer hunters from Buffalo, including my family, my brother Leslie, my nephew Harold Caverly, sometimes my brother Nelson, and then friends in Hinsdale. ??? was my next door neighbor. She and I bought deer licenses and went up on the back of our land to watch and wait. Two other hunters came along and talked a few minutes about what land was posted and where the deer ran. They went on, just over the line. We heard a crashing through the woods. There was a deer coming, it was being chased by a dog. We all shot. Nobody knew whose slug brought the deer down. It fell on our land. We went over and they came over, right over the fence, and started to dress it. We were foolish enough, or innocent enough, to think that they would divide it with us, because nobody knew whose slug killed it. But they dressed it and walked away with it! Well, we were disappointed, and we went down and told our real hunters about it, and they told us that, it being on our land, that I could have just ordered them off, and we could have had the deer! But I didn't know it. So that was my only venture with hunting.

(2:17)

As to fishing, I have already told you about my first success, a six-inch minnow in the Fay Hollow Brook. After my parents bought their own home, we often fished in Olean Creek, just a short distance behind our house. One time, we were going fishing in the evening, all my friends and part of the family were going along too, and we were preparing the tackle at our house, and we didn't have quite enough for everybody. My brother Nelson, eight years younger than I, probably about 5 or 6 then, wanted to go too, and wanted a fish line, so we just took a stick, an apple tree branch probably, and a piece of twine and a big fish hook which we were sure was too big to catch anything in a little creek, Olean Creek, and we all went fishing. Well, the joke was that Nelson caught a nice big sucker and nobody else caught anything!

(3:39)

Then after we were married, Miner did not want to fish. His mother had taught him to be afraid of the water and stay away from it. But he was willing to go with me, so after Thelma and Howard were both born, we went one time up by the bridge on Cuba Road and Miner stayed in the car with the children and I fished, but I felt sorry for him in the car with the children, and I was fishing just all by myself, which wasn't so much fun. So I didn't try it again and did not get to go fishing for several years.

And then, after the children were grown and we were better off financially, and were able to do things, we went fishing several times up in Canada to Pembroke and the Ottawa River and up north of Ottawa in Quebec with the Colleys. Oh, I enjoyed it so much! But the routine was, that Miner would stay in the cabin with the women, and I went fishing with the men, because I was the only woman that loved to go fishing. My biggest fish that I ever caught was a pike, 26

inches long, and I was quite thrilled when I landed him. That was in the Ottawa river at Pembroke.

(5:53)

Now about pets. We always had a cat. I remember a black and white cat. I was three or four, playing on the floor, and I set the cat in the bottom part of the washpan, or commode, in the bedroom. I banged the door shut quick, and broke its tail. She meowed and took on, and I quick opened the door and saw about half of her tail hanging down. I told Mama quick to come. Well, they amputated the part that was broken off and she was a bob-tail cat after that.

The next one I remember was a Maltese female cat, Smooth, that was brought to us by our hired girl. She was a kitten when she came. We had her for several years, and she had kittens which we disposed of as best we could. I think it was Smooth that we still had when we saw the kittens born, which I have told you about already. And then Pickle Breeches and Peter Shafer, two tiger kittens that we had. Well, one thing about it was - Pickle Breeches was a tiger, and trimmed with white, and Peter Shafer was all tiger. Peter Shafer turned out to be a female, and she never was as nice and big as Pickle Breeches was. They lasted for a long time.

Casper was a Maltese male, and he was [neutered], and he was named for Casper Blackmun who was Marian's boyfriend at the time, and he went to Buffalo when my parents - my father and stepmother - moved to Buffalo, and he died of old age.

(8:52)

And up at Grandpa Witter's they always had dogs, which were important to me. If I would run from the house to the barn, or running around outdoors anywhere, they would jump up on me. I was timid, but I wouldn't admit it. So it was a dread to me, I didn't want to admit that I was afraid, but I really was. When Grandpa moved to Hinsdale, they had a part shepherd, Mack, that came to our house to live. I tolerated him, but did not love a dog, any dog, until years later, in our own home.

We were given a female dog who had a litter of puppies, which we raised - I think it was seven, and disposed of. One of those puppies was quite a pet, which we kept, not for too long either. I was keeping chickens at the time, laying hens, and raised chickens. He was trying to catch the chickens, and I worked one summer trying to break him, and then through the winter there weren't any chickens available for him to catch. I hoped that he would be broken by the next spring and watched him carefully. He held by the wayside, and even though I was watching him carefully and keeping the chickens shut up, he sneaked by me and got one. So I saw that I had to let him go. And the reason that I'd grown to really love him was because he'd had pneumonia the winter before and I'd nursed him through that with whiskey slings, milk and that medicine -by the kitchen stove - on a rug beside the kitchen stove. I came to love him, and when the SPCA truck came after him, I just put my head on my arm up against the wall and cried. That's my experience with pets. We never had birds nor fish nor anything else.

(12:00)

Now I've come to holidays. To my brothers and me in our home, several occasions were holidays to us. First was Decoration Day. We made wreathes in the forenoon. Before Decoration Day, we were to choose our partner for the march. We marched from the schoolhouse to the Maplehurst Cemetery two by two. More than once I chose Mildred Goodrich. We made our wreathes to put on the graves in the cemetery. We were to take them to the cemetery, and we were fussing about whether the lilacs would be out or not. Maybe they would be out ahead of time, great concern about what we were going to use to make our wreathes. We went after dinner, Decoration Day. We all went up to the square in front of the schoolhouse and the band was out with Peter Cashen at the bass drum, Will Gould at the fife and Mark Pierce at the snare drum, I think, and we got in line and each was given a flag to carry. Then we marched up into the town hall for the exercises, where we sang - we had song sheets with patriotic songs. Then one of the old folks, the DAR were the ones that were in charge of it.

(14:16)

One of the old soldiers read the list of those that had died in battle, and then the list of all those from the Town of Hinsdale that had enlisted or were in the War in the Army or the Navy. Then Blanche Hillman almost always the one who recited the Gettysburg Address. And then we marched to the cemetery and put the wreathes on the graves as directed. The soldiers and the DAR would tell us where to put them. And lots of times there was some activity, either in the Baptist churchyard or on the flats. There had been a racetrack, and a grandstand, and sometimes a baseball game down there.

(15:25)

And then Children's Day. Practically all the children in town went to Sunday School, and on Children's Day we had exercises, spoke pieces in place of the church service. We had the Children's Day exercises. All the girls had white dresses, and most of us pink or blue ribbon sashes, and ribbons in our hair.

And then a third important day was the Witter Reunion. There we would see Betsy Jordan, Marie Aniston, and Grandpa Witter was the president and had to make a speech. And all the different children got up and performed whatever - they could speak a piece or sing a song or do something. Everybody showed off their children. Clara Jordan was always running around, fast, waiting on everybody, seeing that everybody had a good time. And Myron Witter was the kisser. He always kissed all the women. That was sort of a question to me, because my mother held puritanical ideas, and did not believe in showing emotion or public kissing. Why it was her ideas were strict about it, but still he kissed all the women at the reunion! But as I grew older I adjusted to the idea. And all of the aunts, that is my father's aunts, were old ladies, and had been widowed from their husbands. Aunt Eliza had a second - I guess it was her third husband. They all would sit on the porch in a row, visit and talk.

(17:48)

In 1909, the reunion was at Aunt Eliza Jobe's house in Cuba. In 1910, it was at Volney Scott's. At that time, I was changing from playing with Marie Aniston and Betsy Jordan, to the older girls, Ada Kellogg and Hazel Scott. And this reunion at Aunt Eliza's was one of the turning points of my life, because Ada Kellogg and Hazel Scott and Ruth Bebe, the three of them and Miner Scott and one or two of the Threeter boys all walked downtown to Cuba, and got ice cream. And I thought, "Hmm - if I was old enough, how wonderful that would be! To walk downtown with the boys and have ice cream instead of just playing around with the little girls." So, the next year, at Volney Scott's, we weren't where we could walk downtown, but we played croquet, and I played croquet with Miner, and some of the rest of them. So that, through the reunion, one of my stages in growing up.

(19:30)

And then there was Thanksgiving, which of course is a holiday, and ahead of time we usually went up to Grandma Witter's, often did, and Grandpa Witter would come and get us with a bob-sled if it was sleighing, and every now and then it would be at Thanksgiving, because of course roads were not plowed bare, and the weather seems like was different then than it is now. So we were always happy if there was snow enough so he could come with the sleigh, and we sat- he had straw in the back of the bobsled, and we sat down in the straw to ride up to Grandpa's.

I remember Thanksgiving in 1899 particularly, we lived in what we referred to as the Matson place on the Flats, we had lived there that summer, and they had drilled for oil and gas right next to us, and we had enough gas that 'twas piped down to our house, and we had a log burner in the cookstove, and the turkey was in the oven, and the gas went out - stopped. Well, that was quite a commotion! Aunt Ruby and Uncle Jay and Grandpa and Grandma were there, and well, they bustled around and took the gas log out and got wood and started the fire, so we had our dinner just the same. That time, we had turkey, because it was turkey in the oven. But when we went to Grandma Witter's she usually had chicken, because they raised chickens. They would have a nice big fat rooster for Thanksgiving.

And then one year, later, we went to Uncle Jay's and Aunt Gertie had everything you can think of - two or three kinds of pie, and different kinds of cake and all baked up, everything! I don't know what the meat was, but Mama's idea was to have a well-balanced meal - make that the main point - and Aunt Gertie's way was to just show what a good cook she was, how many different things she could make, which was sort of the idea of Thanksgiving to many people. So, that was two different ideas that I had to think about.

(22:31)

Christmas, we made gifts before Christmas, hand-stitched handkerchiefs, did outline work, crocheting for the aunts and friends and teachers. One year I remember a little picture, they were passer-par-tout in pictures, that had a piece of glass in a binding you put around the edge, fixed the picture that way to hang it, and I passer-par-tou-ed a picture of kittens for my teacher Mary Fay. But she said - well she liked dogs better than kittens - but she thanked me just the

same. I was disappointed because she would have like a picture of dogs better than she did [??]

(22:35)

In Pierce's store, general store and post office, they always had one corner of the store was a display of Christmas things - Christmas gifts and decorations - and one year was what I considered a beautiful angel in that display, and I looked at it, and looked at it. I thought that was just SO pretty, would look so pretty at the top of our Christmas tree. We always went out in the woods and got a Christmas tree and decorated it. Well, I got - we never had an allowance or very much money, but I saved whatever I could, and had enough to buy that angel and took it home, and hid it away, and then when Christmas came I got it out and gave it to Mama for Christmas to put up top of the tree.

Christmas Eve at church was very very important! We had a big tree and Santa Claus always came, and some people brought in all of the family's gifts for their children, and put them on the tree. It was a BIG tree, oh! Eight or ten feet tree that was decorated, and we usually had a new wool dress for Christmas, and we spoke pieces and had exercises then, and then Santa Claus would come and take them off the tree. Each child got a bag of nuts and hard candy. My folks always saw that we each had one present off the tree, but they didn't bring our family presents. Some received all of their gifts from off the tree. Then this was NOT on the tree, but in our stockings. We all hung up our stockings, Papa and Mama too, we all hung up our stockings. One year we received, Marian and I, what we called 'cloth dolls'. It was stamped on muslin material, the face and clothes and all, and it was to be cut out and sewed up and stuffed and dressed, and these dolls were a little bit larger than a new-born baby, about that size, and were soft and cuddly. These cloth dolls were our main joy, at least mine was, for years. Her name was Kate, and Marian's was Lulu. That was for two young ladies that we saw in town, and admired. They had on turkey red calico dresses, white petticoats. Once I peeked where Mama had the Christmas things hidden, and I saw a string of blue beads was all I saw. But then that bothered me all the rest of the time until Christmas - that I had peeked and knew one of the things that was in the chest. I think the beads were mine, that I got them.

(28:26)

Then another year we got different dolls. They had bisque heads and kid bodies and were dressed fancier - fancier clothes. They were named Mildred and Edna for playmates of ours, and they had REAL HAIR, curly hair!

After we were married, on after Mama died and several of the others were married, the whole family, my brothers and sisters and I got together overnight at Christmas time, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, at different places.

For birthdays, we did not have birthday parties. They weren't as popular then as they are now, for some reason or other. But, the birthday child always had a birthday cake and one gift from the parents. I remember things that I got - one year I got my bicycle and another year I got a Bible, and another year Papa was away and sent me a box of flowers from the woods -

philodendrons I guess it was - that he was somewhere where they grew wild and he got this box and filled it and sent me a box of flowers. And one year - oh, when I was about eight or nine - my mother had a heavy iron - cast iron -teakettle that held probably two gallons of water. I'd heard of copper-bottom nickel-plated teakettles, and they had one over at Goodrich's hardware store. So before her birthday, I'd carefully saved every penny I could get hold of, and by her birthday I had enough to buy the teakettle, so I went over and bought it and gave it to her for her birthday.

Furnishings

(31:25)

As long as we lived on Congress Street, we used much of Grandma Norton's furniture. In her parlor, I well remember the red rosey and the Brussels wall-to-wall carpeting, a drop-leaf cherry table with a red damask fringed cloth. In our part, a what-not, couch, bedroom suite, mahogany drop-leaf table, cane-seated chairs, a Boston rocker, red velour drapes in the doorway, old melodion and the organ. In the kitchen, an oak dining table, an extension table which Grandma had bought, teaching school during her first year of married life, and with that were oak dining chairs - old fashioned ones with what I guess you'd call a fiddle back - different than what were then modern - they had been Grandma Norton's.

After we moved into the whole of Grandpa Witter's house, they began buying in-grain parlor carpet, a three-piece mahogany set - not upholstered, just wood divan, table and chair, and a lamp. About the lamp - they were going to Olean after I'd gone to bed, and I heard in the morning that they'd bought a new lamp for the parlor table, so in the morning I went down, anxious to see the beautiful new lamp that they'd bought, and it was really a very pretty lamp, having a shade that colored up the light. It had a bowl shape that reflected the light up to the ceiling so it would be diffused, and that was panels of yellow glass in a metal filigree around the edge of each panel. I looked at it and the filigree was gold colored but it had some green on it - touches of green enamel - I stood and looked at it and said "Hmmp!! Molded already!" That's just a memory...

(34:22)

Also she bought a golden oak dining chairs, modern ones- what were then modern - to go with the table. I have told about the dressing table in Marian's and my room. It was home-made from packing boxes.

My mother made curtains, sheets - two widths together - pillow cases and other household linens. I also remember a small mail tag made into a child's low chair, padded and covered with red velour.

At first our only fuel was wood for both the kitchen and the heating stove. About 1902 they bought a coal and wood range with a reservoir, a large oven, ash pan, warming oven... what luxury!! Oh, but we were proud of that! I think it was later, around... [end of side]

(35:38)

Heating Stoves

We grew up around heating stoves. For lights, we had kerosene lamps which required routine filling, cleaning, trimming, polishing the chimneys, using care. In 1911, we put in an acetylene system. They came and sold it to Papa, and then he sold it later. It made gas in the cellar. Water service we had up on the hill. On Congress Street, there was a dug well, laid up, and it had a square box on top, and a windlass, and a rope and bucket, and we pulled water up with the windlass. But we still had outdoor toilets, and at the Maxxon place there was a spring several rods from the house. I don't remember water in the house, but I remember going to this spring to get drinking water. No, I think there was a pitcher pump in the sink, but we went out to the spring for the drinking water. In Hinsdale, we had a well also, a dug well with a top, and a windlass, but we also had cold water, running, from the spring up on the [??] that the town owned up on the hill, it was really town water, although it wasn't a town organization with that. And we had a wooden sink with a - I'm sure the drain didn't go outdoors - we had a bucket that would catch the drips of water so it didn't go on the floor. But the dishwater and slops had to be thrown outside.

(38:15)

Then when our parents bought our own home, we had cold running water, and an iron sink, and a drain that ran outside. Then in 1911, they put in the bathroom and a sewage system. As to privacy, I would say it was always good. We were never more than two of the same sex, and close age, together in a fair-sized bedroom with beds, dresser, washpan, toilet facilities and table with light enough for reading. The rooms were comfortably heated with stovepipes or registers or in some cases a small stove.

Boyfriends

Well, all I can say about my boyfriend - George Maxwell was the first one. We had a Sunday school picnic and each boy in the boys' Sunday school class was allowed to invite a girl, preferably from the girls' Sunday school class. Well, he invited me and Mama questioned - I was only 12, she didn't approve of any such goings-on, but then she didn't want to disappoint me, so she said we'd ask Papa. Well, Papa said yes, I could go. So, he took me to the party, and brought me home. Then the next Monday morning in school, he gave me a perfumed locket and chain, some cheap thing, but I had to give it back to him, because my mother said it was not proper for young girls to receive jewelry from boys. So that was George Maxwell.

And then there was Lloyd Weaver - that wasn't very much. He was Aunt Gertie's brother, and I knew him fairly well because of that. But one Sunday he came to our house, but Aunt Gertie wasn't there, he just came to our house to visit, was invited in, ate supper... I was real conscious about it, flustered ??? and after he left, I made some remark that my mother didn't consider proper - oh, well I said I was excited - at the supper table, I said "Oh, well I'm hot! I'm often hot!" Well, my mother - oh, and another thing, I sat up on the kitchen cabinet and swung my feet, and he was standing nearby talking to me. Well, that wasn't proper either, my mother said it was time I learned a few things. You should NEVER say anything about being hot in front

of boys, and you weren't supposed to swing your feet. You were supposed to keep your feet solid on the floor, when any men were around, or boys.

(42:20)

Well, next came Edward Kent, when I was 14. I told you about him, and about Dean. And then Marian's boyfriend was Casper Blackmun. And Phil ???

We kidded.... Really, she did walk down - he walked home with her. That really was more something, we kidded her about it. He walked through our yard - he was always dressed up so nice and pretty - he came up the towpath from his home down there and up through our yard to the street. He went to school up in Hinsdale and we just kidded her about it, for some reason or other.

(43:30)

And girlfriends - Mildred Goodrich was my earliest girlfriend in Hinsdale, and then Dorothea and Elodine in our ??? Years. And Marian's friends were Nora Golden ??? And then the Maplehurst girls - she got in with the Maplehurst girls. They did not have a very good reputation. Lewis was 13 when I left home, and he was not interested in girlfriends yet. Nelson was always popular, but there was nobody particular as far as he was concerned, as long as I was at home.

(44:21)

It is now September 31st. For the past month I think I've caught up with my correspondence and got my finances all in order to turn them over to my son Howard. So, I've been busy with that, but now I'll go on with Health Care, and Doctors In the latter part of the 19th century, Doctor Brownson was the community doctor in Hinsdale. He married one of the Gile girls, Permelia, and lived in the house across the Flanagan Road from the Methodist Church. He built an office down closer to Main Street. In the course of time, he took Dr. Vincent as a partner. From my earliest recollections, Dr. Vincent was 'the doctor'. He b??? Himself to patrons within a radius of several miles. He delivered babies and made house calls any time of the day or night whether he was paid or not. The balance of each day he was in his office. He performed surgeries. I remember a man was brought in with his foot cut- a big slash in his foot from an ax, cutting wood. The doctor sewed it up. And he set bones. Grandma Norton fell and dislocated her shoulder and he fixed that up for her. Anybody who had broken bones or troubles, he took care of it.

(46:28)

We lived across the street, directly across Main Street from his office, so we knew quite a bit about what went on over there. In the office, there were steps, about five or six steps up to a porch on the front, and you could go under the porch. There was a narrow porch across the front of the building, and steps leading up to it. You could see behind the steps, under the porch, and it looked very mysterious to me as a child. My early belief was the babies slid down on a moonbeam from heaven, and that Dr. Vincent's babes landed under this porch, and I don't

know how he knew they were there, but he would come with his little satchel and pick the baby up and deliver it where it was supposed to go. Dr. Vincent also had a small pharmacy in his office. He mixed drugs, he mixed powders, he mixed liquids, and put them out in little bottles or little powder filled - with white paper, something like a cigarette the powder was rolled up in, you could put it in a spoon and wash it down with a drink of water. And he also was active in civil service and anything in community affairs he was interested in. He was on the school board, and just a very, very important citizen. And he took sick when I was about eight or nine years old. And then we heard he wasn't able to come and practice anymore. He eventually died - it was cancer of the liver - and everybody mourned. School was let out so we could go to the funeral the day he was buried. Everybody was very sad, and nobody ever took his place.

(49:24)

Dr. Haskell came, and then there was a Dr. Terry who came the nearest to being a real village physician, a town physician for the whole area. But not to the extent that Dr. Vincent was.

It is now the 10th of November and I have not done any work with this for a bout six weeks. For the last two or three days I've tried to get back in step with it. I'm not doing very well, I'm sorry. I'm trying.

The next subject in the outline that Sue gave me is about surgery. We knew that sometimes, someone had surgery, but I knew little about it until about 1908. Mrs. Goodrich had a tumor removed. She went to the hospital in Olean. She partially recovered, but did not live long thereafter. Soon, tonsils and adenoids were the style to be removed. The surgeons came to the home, and operated on the kitchen table. That was the way that Howard's were taken out, and I put him in bed, well, for part of a day, and then he was up around. My first experience with hospitals was February, 1914, when I was taken in to Higgins Memorial, now Olean General. I was so relieved! I'd been in a room at home. Howard was born at home, and I'd been in this small bedroom and it seems become very sick after, 10 days after childbirth - I had infection, was very ill, I had a fever and it had striped wallpaper, a soft shade of grey with purple roses, ribbons running up and down on the walls, seemed as if they jumped out at me. And when I got in the hospital the walls were just a soft creme color, I was so relieved! It just seemed so wonderful to me! My experience there was really very good - there was a nurse there called T Fox, Theresa Fox, that took all kinds of pains with me, pumped out my breasts every night, so that I kept my milk and could still nurse Howard when I got back home, so from then on I was in favor of people going to the hospital, and getting hospital care, no question about it when Thelma came.

In his pharmacy, Dr. Vincent mixed his own prescriptions. For a refill, return bottle if liquid. He kept records, so refills were possible, but not as general as now. Quinine, calomel, ?? Powder, compound cathartic, bree, iron and lime, and then there were patent medicines, Smith Brother's cough drops, Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and we had medicine shows. And there were Dr. Williams' Pink Pills also, that were a popular medicine.

(53:40)

For home remedies, for respiratory infection, or other inflammation, turpentine and lard, lemon poultice, and mustard plasters. Also cold compresses, or hot compresses - just cold water or hot water, on a cloth, wrung out and put over, and then a piece of flannel over that. For a cough, onion syrup, lemon juice, honey and melted butter, vinegar and molasses in melted butter. As a general tonic, squaw vine, bone set tea, ??? Molasses, cod-liver oil, cold balls, ???. I must also mention, Indian poultices. There was, over on the Indian reservation over near Salamanca, there was an Indian that made a poultice for blood poisoning, and when Coolidge's son had blood poisoning, somebody recommended - I forget just what there was about it - these poultices really did draw the poison out if anyone had blood poisoning.

(55:16)

As for dentists - we were taught to clean our teeth with salt or soda. I preferred salt. ???the California Perfume Company, later Avon, brought out a tooth soap, a little cake in a metal case. You'd wet your brush and scrub it across that to get the soap on it, and just - then we had that and used that. I never went to the dentist until after I was married, and then I had my teeth checked and cleaned. There were no fillings to be made - my teeth were especially good. Then after that I had a regular six-month checkup for myself and for the family as they came along. We went to Dr. Lawrence Shaner for years. I now have partial uppers and partial lowers.

(56:42)

Among my earliest recollections are many scenes connected with the Hinsdale Methodist Episcopal Church and Sunday School. Judith Goodrich, a rather large woman, was the primary Sunday School teacher. Each child brought one penny, and put them together for our collection. We had picture cards - colored pictures in connection with the lesson - of different people, whatever the lesson was about. On the bottom of the card was the Golden Text. I was always taught the Golden Text at home, so that I could recite it when I got to Sunday School class - not to have to learn it after I got there.

An incident about going home from Sunday School - my concept - well, my mother would sing to me at bedtime "At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light, and the burden of my heart rolled away." Well, I visualized that in my mind as going up quite a steep hill and across the Erie tracks, walking to get home from Sunday School and I visualized it as coming toward the tracks, and there was a train coming down the tracks with its bright headlight on - that's when I first saw the light - and the burden of my heart that rolled away - there was a railing along and a steep bank down, so the burden was a great big stone, and it rolled down that bank, and now I was happy all the day! Just an illustration of the concepts children develop.

We were taught to say our prayers - "Now I lay me down to sleep" that old standard. We would pray 'Bless Papa and Momma, Marian and me - include whoever we wanted to pray for in that prayer. And quite early, when I was seven or eight, Mamma started reading to me, Marian and I - I don't know about Lewis - reading to us every night before we went to bed from the Bible. And she started in Genesis, and she got over as far as the children of Israel conquering the other countries, and the Hittites and the Jebusites and all of that, and I didn't like that very well, and I said "I don't like the Hittites and Jebusites and all those 'ites'. Well, Mama sort of

re-thought, that we weren't getting what she wanted us to get from that reading of the Bible, so she got a book of Bible stories. Well, that made it very interesting! We loved those stories, and grew to know them and be able to tell them. They were really part of our lives - all of the Bible stories. And we went to Junior League, which was - really, Epworth League, the Methodist young people's organization. We had Junior League on Sunday afternoons, and that was for children 7 or 8 till 15 probably. Mamma led the Junior League, and I went to that.

(1:00:01)

About that time Mildred Pierce became my Sunday School teacher, and we were old enough to have a quarterly, and read our lessons ourselves. Oh, we all loved Mildred Pierce. She was such a lovely young woman, and was so good to us, and taught us so well from our quarterly. And when she was to be married she invited her Sunday School class all to her wedding, about 8 or 10 of us. We formed an aisle from the foot of the stairs and across the hall and across the sitting room to the corner where the bride was to stand, where the marriage was to take place. We made daisy chains, and held those daisy chains - we made the aisle from the foot of the stairs across. For a wedding present, we had a picture taken of all of us together, and had the picture framed, and gave her for a present, and each of us had a copy of the picture too. I still have my copy of that Sunday School class. And after she was married, she went to Buffalo to live, so Mary Calkins became our Sunday School teacher, and we liked her too. She was different from Mildred, she was older than Mildred, she was a spinster. She was a good worker, she organized the Anti-Can't Club - you mustn't say "I can't". You could say "I'll try!". If we were asked to do it, we were to say "I'll try!" You were fined one penny - we had meetings Sunday afternoon - if you said "I can't" you'd be fined one penny.

As with all the Methodist churches at that time, we had annual, and sometimes oftener, revival meetings, where everybody went to church every night or three times a week, anyway, and had a special preacher and special singing and special choir to sing, and everybody got excited and revived in their Christianity. I went, from the time I was probably ten, I went to the revival meetings, and listened to the sermons, but Mama was very firm that a child was not old enough to make a decision for themselves until they were at least 12 or probably 14 years old. Some of the other younger children did go forward and Mama said she didn't think they were old enough, so I was under no pressure at all, but I went and listened to the sermons and had the benefit of it in that way. And in one very active revival, I don't remember who the evangelist was, my father was re-dedicated, and that caused quite an upheaval in our home, as time went on.

(1:05:29)

My father had joined the Maplehurst Baptist Church when he was just 12 years old, and his mother had dedicated him to the Lord's service and she felt that he should be a minister, and he thought then that he would be a minister. So he went to Olean to high school, and was preparing with a thought of getting an education of being a Baptist minister. Well, when he fell in love with my mother, and got married, Mama was a Methodist, so he gave up the idea of being a minister and joined the Methodist church with her. So that's where my background began, in the Methodist church, though I sometimes went with my Grandfather Witter up to the Baptist church.

At this particular revival meeting that I remember so well, Papa went forward and was re-dedicated, and he thought that he was supposed to be a minister, he should be a minister, and he felt drawn to make a public confession. Well, I don't understand exactly what there was about that. On a Monday morning, anyway, instead of going away on the train, going back to work - he was a traveling salesman - instead of going away from home, he and Mama were sitting in the living room talking and they were both crying and, well, a very upsetting time. I had faith enough - was conscious enough of religious matters - I went upstairs. I didn't know what was wrong, but I knew something was wrong, so I went upstairs and knelt down by my bed and prayed God to be with them, whatever the trouble was, to straighten it out. So, well, anyway, he made the public confession. He bought books and started to learn to be a Methodist minister, and studied seriously, and he did smoke before that, he gave up smoking, he was more conservative in his expenditures, more devoted to us, to his family.

(1:08:35)

He was *seriously* studying the Bible, and thinking seriously about the different doctrines and beliefs all of this time. He became a little bit dissatisfied with some of the Methodist doctrines - he couldn't quite see it that way. One night in the dresser drawer of his hotel room, he found a book, a Bible study book, a book about the Bible, without any cover, any date, any title, but he started reading it, and that struck him as the truth, that answered the questions he'd been pondering, and he studied it, and he tried to find out who published it, and what there was about it. At first he couldn't, but finally he did find out it was published by the International Bible Student's Association, which was headed by Pastor Charles T. Russell, so he got in touch with a Bible Study class in Olean then at the home of people named Ganoungs, the sign painter's father at that time. He began going down to study with him and took up that first volume of Studies in the Scriptures, accepted that whole as his belief.

(1:10:34)

He continued to go to the Methodist Church, but also continued to study that, and look into that belief more. But he finally decided that that was the teaching, that if you believed that, that the churches were wrong, that you should withdraw from the organized churches. So he became convinced that that was what he should do. And so he went and talked with the pastor and reasoned it out, and the pastor said he could believe that and still belong to the Methodists - the Methodists were liberal in their beliefs. But he said no, he felt he should withdraw from the church. So he did, but he did not make us stop going at first - gradually we were forbidden to go to Sunday School - over a period of time. We went for a while, but then we started having Sunday School at home. We made the gradual change from the Methodists to being just at home.

For myself, I could see the logic of the other belief, but I resented being taken out of the Sunday School. It meant quite a difference in our lives, not being in the Sunday School because that was such an important part - the church was an important part of community life. In other words, I resented it, but I learned to tolerate it and to keep my mouth shut. As soon as I was away from home, I started going to regular church, and at Alfred we went to the community church, and went to church when I was away from home.

My mother thoroughly believed that the man should be the head of the house and the one who decided all important matters, so she cooperated with my father, but she was not as enthusiastic in that Russellite belief and she sometimes let us go to church doings when my father was away from home. I just want to make it plain that she believed in cooperation, but was not as thoroughly sold on the idea.

(1:13:50)

My outline suggests the topic of the effect on community life of the church. I think the best I can do in relation to that - I have a paper that I wrote in 1955 - that's a good many years ago - for the historical society. The title was Life on the Square in Hinsdale in the Early 1900s.

The tract of land in Hinsdale now called The Park, including the site of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Fire Hall was presented as a commons to the town of Hinsdale in the late 1840s by Henry and Permelia Wood. The story of the acceptance and use of the commons is most interesting but we will stick to the turn of the century, the early 1900s. At this time, the area was generally referred to as The Square rather than as the commons. It had become the center of practically all of the religious, educational, civic and recreational and social life of the community. The Methodist Church building was basically the same as at present. Forming an L - behind and to the south - were the church sheds, which were used not only by people attending church, but also as a public hitching stable, whatever one's business in town might be. Approximately where the fire hall now stands, a large, white, two story frame building, ?? Colonial in architecture. The main floor of this building was a school, divided into three classrooms, the Primary room to the left, the Intermediate room to the left of the entrance hall, and the High School to the right. The second story was a combination Town Hall, auditorium, opera house and community center. In 1901, under the direction of Max Torrey as principal, it was also equipped and used as the school gymnasium.

The square was crossed diagonally by two well-gravelled walks, intersecting at the center. It was used principally as a playground in connection with the school. Here the boys had their baseball diamond, there was plenty of room for Pussy Wants a Corner, tag, London Bridge, Needle's Eye, Old Buzzard, Moving Statues, Snap the Whip. Best of all to me were the lovely leaf houses which we built and arranged almost daily as long as the weather was nice in the fall. In the church, Elder Carrier was the full-time resident pastor, Warren Gile was Sunday School superintendent. Almost every child in the village and many from outside attended Sunday school regularly. The Sunday School picnic was the highlight of summertime, and Easter, Children's Day and Christmas were always big events. Special printed programs were always purchased, containing songs, recitations and exercises which were rehearsed by classes, many times for two weeks or more before the important occasion. Then, at least once, usually on the Saturday night before the program was to be presented, it was rehearsed, 'just as you're going to do it tomorrow'. Every child took part in at least one number. A new dress was usually in order, and I remember more than one occasion when some of the mothers got together and provided a new dress for a child of one of the poor families who were not able to buy one for themselves.

(1:18:37)

The Christmas program in the church auditorium, with ten or twelve foot Christmas tree and Santa, sometimes in a red suit with fur boots, but sometimes in a fur coat, always with sleigh bells, was the climax of the Sunday School year. There were of course no lights on the tree, but oh the beautiful tinsel, strings of cranberries, popcorn and the gifts, beautiful dolls, strings of beads, white mittens and many other things tied to the branches. For many families, Santa left all their presents at the church, knowing of course that they would be there. The Epworth League society which met every Sunday at 7:30 PM was something like the Young People's of today, but included members of a much greater variation of age. It was also a social organization. They held evening socials at the church or at the homes of members which were partially to raise money but at the same time games were played and a good social time was had by all. They usually sponsored a Lyceum entertainment course each season, which was a series of five or six lectures, musical and entertainment events - the cultural life of a community, whose sponsors took care of the advertising, furnished the town hall and entertained the ???. The bursar received a percentage of the receipts. I well recall how thrilled I was when ?? A team of four sisters, musical entertainers, stayed at our house. I was almost shocked by their evening gowns, almost backless, and only straps over their shoulders to hold up the front. But my mother explained to me that entertainers and opera singers, always dressed that way. It was the conventional thing to do, and of course one must observe convention.

(1:21:01)

The Ladies Day suppers which were held once a month, were also an important part of community life. The charge was ten cents a person for a baked bean supper. I think perhaps the chicken pie supper was slightly more. Many of the women had some specialty which they usually preferred to prepare. Mary Wood's sixteen layer cake was what I remember best. The families often stayed and enjoyed a social hour after supper. During the cold weather the socials were usually held in private homes. At our house, the children were enjoying a game of hide-and-seek upstairs and in the kitchen chamber. A gangling boy of 12 or 13 folded himself up like a jackknife on the top shelf of my mother's clothes room. We could not find him. Many of the parents were drawn into the hunt before he was discovered.

Other events at the church were the usual revival week and Christian Temperance lectures. Both of these, someone came in from outside, and both of these were highly emotional. They were a very important influence in our growing up and development of ideals.

At school, we had rhetorical and special programs to which our parents were invited to see their darlings perform. The ??? Were held in our own rooms, but commencement was something very special! That was held upstairs in the town hall. It was the event of the year of the whole school. Nellie Green, now Phillips, taught the Primary and then Intermediate departments was the moving spirit in the parts presented by the grades. She would have us practice for hours on a drill, pantomime, or exercise. These often required considerable costuming and preparation of stage properties. Others cooperated, and no effort seemed too great to produce the desired effect. Miss Green was a perfectionist and inspired us with the same feeling. My age group girls had floor-length Mother Hubbards made of white cheesecloth which served as the basis for different effects. One year we presented a pantomime action of

the film America - the words being sung by a soloist. With our cheesecloth dresses, we wore sashes of red, white and blue bunting about a foot wide, tied in a huge bow in the back with streamers to the floor. We had some sort of red, white and blue headdress, I do not recall exactly what. Included in the grade program were also songs and recitations by the pupils. Following the grade part came the essays by the graduates of the high school, interspersed with music by the Caverly Family Orchestra, and perhaps an instrumental solo by one of the upper grade or high school pupils. The president of the school board, the honorable F N Wood would then make appropriate remarks and present the diplomas, first to the high school graduates, and then to those finishing eighth grade, and finally to those going from the primary department to the fifth grade. The pastor of the Methodist church would then pronounce the benediction and vacation had begun!

(1:26:31)

Another very important event on the town square was the Decoration Day celebration. A day before the teachers asked each child to be prepared with a wreath of flowers and ferns or evergreens to carry to the cemetery to decorate soldiers' graves. These were usually made Decoration Day forenoon. An early dinner was then in order. This was before the Ladies Aid Decoration Day dinners. Immediately after, we were dressed in our best usually ???? and taking our wreaths assembled on the square. Peter Cashen with the bass drum, Mark Pierce the postmaster with a snare drum, William Gould with a fife were already there, getting tuned up. George Button was marshal, and he insisted that teachers and some of the other GAR members lined us up, double file, from the smallest to the larger. We marched up into the town hall, preceded by the fife and drum corp and the GAR members in uniform. We were seated in the front of the hall. The Caverly Family Orchestra accompanied the group singing patriotic songs from a special Decoration Day song card. Blanche Bandfield, later Mrs. Herbert Hillman recited a long poem. One of the older pupils gave the Gettysburg Address and of course there was the speaker of the day. The GAR honor roll in two or three parts was then read by a GAR member. I recall George Bandfield and Meritt Gile having read it on different occasions. After this we marched out as we had come in. We halted on the square until each child had been given a small flag and instructed how to carry it. The procession then moved up the dusty road to Maplehurst cemetery, where, under the direction of the GAR, our wreaths were placed, and also a flag, on each soldier's grave.

The open opera house facilities, or town hall, were frequently made use of for home talent plays and minstrel shows, magic lantern lectures and variety entertainment. The Lyceum courses sponsored by the Epworth League were held there. The Episcopal Church of Olean for a time held services for a group of local members. These were not Sunday services, however, and the Episcopalians attended services in the Methodist church on Sundays. There was a group of citizens who might be referred to as the 400 Society of Hinsdale. They had Saturday night dancing parties in the town hall, sometimes card parties. The place was really a community hall in the broadest sense, and Hinsdale at that time, it seems to me, had an exceptionally fine community life, centered around the Square. I would like to add that it was the town hall in that we voted there. It was also used for that.

(1:29:42)

I would now like to finish the story of my father's religion. One of the fundamentals of their belief was that the present evil age would end by or before October 1, 1914. World War I did begin in August, 1914. The true believers were to be glorified by that time. As time passed, it became apparent that there had been some miscalculation, but they still trusted. In 1916, Pastor Russell died. He was the author of the six volumes of Studies in the Scriptures, their revered leader, and president of the corporation that owned the printing plant where all literature was published, and also the Bible House where the itinerant preachers called Pilgrim Brothers and their wives lived. Pandemonium broke loose. Their leader was gone. Each one of them wished to be a leader. A power struggle ensued. One of the Pilgrim Brothers was a lawyer and also, I understand, a judge. He had the knowledge and the power to get possession of the property. Five or six of the others started their own splinter groups, putting out printed matter and so forth. Papa studied all and after some time selected Paul Johnson, an English Jew, as the best. He had quite a following, published a magazine and tracts, and held conventions. He preached my mother's funeral sermon.

(1:31:50)

My mother died in April 1918, three and a half years after October 1, 1914. Curiously, there is a prophecy about an interval of three and a half years at the time of the end. Pastor Russell had died. Papa believed that Mama was one of the Elect, and that he had missed the highest award. After a time, he married Nellie Stocking, a Registered Nurse, who was a wonderful mother to the four younger children who were at home. She was converted, and loyal to his beliefs. Their marriage lasted only about four years. She died of an embolism following childbirth. The child also died soon after. Later Papa attended a convention in Toledo, Ohio, met Marie Keustardt, a spinster of some means. She wanted a husband, so they were married. A bible verse from the New Testament advises, "When you see all these things come to pass, flee to the hills." She was even more positive than my father. Accordingly, when he was no longer able to work, they fled to the national forest in Georgia. They started a home, but Papa died of a heart attack in the fall of 1931.

1989 - Audiotape #3

Recorded by Dan trail, transcribed by Tim Robinson

Tape 2 ended abruptly with the death of my father. He was brought to Hinsdale for a funeral in the Chamberlain home, which was formerly our family home for several years. He was buried in Maplehurst cemetery, between my mother, Belle, and stepmother, Nellie. Marie had financial means of her own. She returned to Georgia and proceeded to build a large community house in the National Forest there. Her ideal was that all of the leaders, including her family, would come there, founding a religious community. She and Papa had filed a claim to the land which needed only to be proven by occupancy. She had the foundation laid, chimneys for at least two

fireplaces, the frame up, the roof on and siding, also windows installed when she realized that nobody else was interested in the religious community way. Her funds were running low. She hung the living room rug against the studs to shut off one room around the fireplace and made herself as comfortable as she could.

We visited her there on our way home from Florida several years later. The post office address was Sarah, Georgia. We went there to ask directions. A true country store, a rack of perhaps ten or twelve mail pigeon holes in one corner. It was about five miles out to her place, just a track, no real road. As we had known her, she had been fastidious, demanding quality in everything, especially taking care in caring for her beautiful long hair which had never been cut. We had to leave the car and walk the last two rods to the house. As we approached, she came around from behind. It seemed that she must be an apparition - nondescript clothing, soiled from contact with the soil of the garden, her hair disheveled, partially confined in long braids. She welcomed us with open arms, made us comfortable as possible, and entertained us over at least one night. She let us go through pictures and take what we liked, also gave us relics of mine.

(3:02)

After her claim was proven, she moved out, rehabilitated herself and got a job in a school cafeteria. She always was an excellent cook. She sold the place to a hunting club and lived in Cleveland (??), Georgia for several years. One time, the mailman noticed that her mail had not been removed from the box for some time, so he investigated. He found her very ill in bed with pneumonia, had her taken to the hospital, and contacted her sister Martha, who came and took charge. Marie died, quite soon. She said that only Erma and I of her family had kept in touch with Marie, so she sent me Marie's diamond and some other things that we could remember her.

I like to analyze and wonder _why_ different things happen the way they are. It's interesting the things.... she also was a good business woman, a good financier, a good housekeeper, took good care of my father, which was a great advantage to us, anyway. Otherwise, we would have had to care for him for the last seven years in one of our homes.

(4:55)

The last chapter, according to Sue's outline, was to be Women's Life - expectations of a wife, community member, mother, as an individual, responses to these expectations. I plan to tell of my responses as I relate the events.

I'll start with 'as a wife'. At the time that I matured and began to consider the future, the chief want of almost every girl was to marry and have a home and family, to be taken care of, as supposed. Any employment as a teacher, or a salesman, or a secretary was considered only temporary, till a White Knight came along. Because school had been easy for me, it was generally expected that I would be a school teacher. I did not want to be an old maid school teacher. I was still much in love with Dean Gamble. He was going on to Agricultural College, earning his own way, and I knew would not be marrying for several years. I remember going for

a walk with my sister Marian one Sunday afternoon when Miner was not allowed to come. We went down the towpath to the Fay Hollow Road, and back up the main road past Gamble's. Dean came out to the road and we talked a bit, and Marian and I went on home. After I was in bed that night I started crying. Marian called Mama, but I could not tell them why I was crying. By this time, Miner was making his intentions quite clear. That's when I made my decision, to accept and enjoy Miner's attention. I respected and admired him and enjoyed being with him. I grew to love him deeply. This was late summer, 1911.

(7:20)

Miner's courtship continued. I was selling McClan Black jewelry and silverware in Cuba to earn money to attend the New York School of Agriculture at Alfred. Miner came down from Friendship on the Erie train, took me to lunch, and we went for a walk through the cemetery, so as to be alone, where he declared his intentions. It was NOT a question, but I knew he wanted an affirmative response. I asked for time. A day or two later I wrote him a letter, still unwilling to be formally engaged, but admitting my pleasure in his company. He did not expect that. He came down to Cuba again in a few days, and we walked out west of Cuba, sat under a tree on the roadside bank. He insisted that he was going to buy me a ring. I finally agreed to accept it. I chose emerald and opal rather than a diamond.

The following Sunday he brought the ring to my home in Hinsdale. Our first kiss, or embrace, was three weeks later, sitting on a bench outside the church in Alfred one evening. My mother had stressed to him her very strict rules as to sexual conduct. The whole winter of 1911/12, practically our only chance to be alone together was walking outside or standing under the porch of The Brick, the girls dormitory where I lived. I worked for my board in The Brick. Another girl and I would do the supper dishes before I could go out. By that time, the crowd at the post office had dispersed, and any cosy places, like the steps in the old Standheim were already occupied. I was disappointed in the situation but my response was to be a prude. I felt myself a little bit superior to the other girls who went out petting and so forth. Any intimacy between us was perfectly OK - we were engaged! I was noticed, and had some rather mild temptations to flirt a little. Twenty five years later I was told 'An attractive new girl came on the campus in the fall of 1911. All the fellows wanted to date her. Miner was always right there, so the poor guys never had a chance!

When school closed, we returned to our respective homes, Miner to work, and I to prepare for marriage. My wedding clothes consisted of x?x undergarments and nightgown, lace trimmed, My wedding gown was fine white wool with tiny blue fleur-de-lis scattered sparsely over the surface with a lace x?x, all made by me. And besides that I had a navy blue suit for going away.

They had two showers for me, one with my best friend, held by Ruth and Mabel Morris. They made a comforter, and it was tied by the guests - they had sewed it up, and the guests tied it that day. I also had two comforters on which I had learned to sew. Mama also let me pick and can red raspberries and some vegetables. I did not go empty-handed. At that time in Hinsdale, nobody had church weddings. The nicest way was a home wedding with family and close friends. Otherwise, the couple and two attendants would go to the parsonage of choice, then you were out or to a home to eat. We planned to be married by Reverend Craw at my parents

home August 21st, 1912. Miner's sister Hazel was my maid of honor, and Lloyd Weaver Miner's best man. Aunt Ruby and Marian helped decorate the southwest corner of the parlor with ferns, golden glow and white everlasting flowers at the altar. Mama had made bride's cake, angel food, and wedding cake, a dark fruit cake. Part of the wedding cake was cut in small cubes, put in little boxes, and tied with yellow ribbon, which was used as favors at the table. Mama and Aunt Ruby had also prepared a luncheon of cold sliced boiled ham, potato salad, rolls, ice cream and the cake. My girlfriends served. After the luncheon I changed into my going-away suit, but we just stayed at my parents home until after dark when the guests had all left.

(13:40)

I will now tell you about our plans for a honeymoon. We could not spend much money as we were going back to Alfred to school. Miner's mother owned part of a farm back up in the sticks. There was a house on it, beautiful pine woods. I wanted to camp there. It was so romantic. BUT, Miner's practical idea was to take his horse and buggy and drive to Elmira NY to visit his sister Sue, taking subscriptions for The American Agriculturalist as we went along, trading a subscription to the paper for food and lodging each night. That is what we did! We were a week on the road. One maiden lady somewhere along the way was glad to let us in. "Yes, she would take the paper and keep us overnight. She'd be glad to! So we stayed. Well, all we had for supper was blackberries and fresh homemade bread. Fresh blackberries, real good, and we had the bread, and for breakfast we had blackberries and bread again. I really enjoyed the experience. Our lives had been quite sheltered.

(15:08)

Our first home. Two stories of a private home behind The Brick on a street in Alfred. We had two rooms - we had to carry up our water and carry down the slops. We had a two-burner gas hot plate and a set-on oven. Orange crate cupboards. Our refrigerator was a box outside the window. Back under the eaves - there was a door opened back under the eaves - we had storage. I made it our home. We lived happily there. Miner proved himself a good host, and I a good hostess. My response was to be very pleased and happy. I was expressing my personality, as they say now-a-days, and he was playing his part. I had, however, expected more romance in marriage. Miner and I both liked to dance, and I could feel romantic when I heard the dance music. Otherwise, he was all practical common sense. I was a bit disappointed but learned to adapt. I suppose everyone has problems in adjusting to marriage. One Sunday as soon as my work was done up, I sat down to read The Trail of the Lonesome Pines. I lost myself in it and read on and on, well into the afternoon. Miner expressed his displeasure. I knew he was right. Our most serious problem was the fact that all senior girls were supposed to spend four weeks practicing housekeeping in the home of Miss Woods. I was conscientious and willing to do it. Miner stood up for his rights! - which embarrassed me. I was torn both ways. The household consisted of Miss Woods, two junior girls, who were paying their board, and the two senior girls who were doing the housework practice. It did not look quite right to Miss Angeline, especially to have a MAN thrown in among women, even though he WAS my husband. She set a cot for him, which he occupied one night, but left at 6 AM. That was not satisfactory, so they compromised. I could sleep at home, but was to be at their place from 6

AM until the dinner works was done and things planned for breakfast at night - of course I went to classes from there. I served two weeks as maid, and then two weeks as housekeeper. I was given a good mark on the course, and Miss Wood recommended me highly to an employer who had enquired about hiring. At least, that is what she told Mama.

(19:10)

We graduated in April, 1913. Miner had accepted a good job on a farm in Bainbridge, NY. The owner of the farm had written the school asking them to recommend a graduate. His son had been given an agriculture education but had died. Director Dubois had recommended Miner, and Miss Woods recommended me. We were both pleased and anxious to go - to accept the job. But Miner's mother felt she could not stand it to have her first born son so far away. She persuaded Volney, Miner's father, to offer him a job on his farm in Friendship, and pleaded with Miner to accept. I agreed, because it had been emphasized to me that the man must always be the head of the house, and of course there was also the question of filial duty. It was not nearly as good an offer as the Bainbridge job. But Father Scott would sign no contract. When my mother found out about that, she protested, but to no avail. The job in Bainbridge was gone.

(20:37)

So we went in with Miner's people, until an abandoned house nearby, bought for \$100, was livable. The house was rather attractive, an old-fashioned, one and a half story farmhouse with veranda across the front. The former owner had built a new Victorian high house and just moved out and left it. It did not require much work to make it livable again, mainly broken windowpanes. Volney Scott bought a second-hand cookstove for us, and in my father's barn were stored the remains of two grandmother's homes which had been broken up. We took bedroom furniture and a rug. Mother Scott gave us a living room carpet and Miner's brother Harley bought a bedroom suite at an auction and an assortment of other odds and ends that we could use in housekeeping. I had saved from my wedding present money that my father had given me with which I bought a set of dishes and living room curtains. So we established our first REAL home! A beautiful Boston rocker, also - I'm not sure- I think that was in the house - been left maybe. But I left it - that added to the situation in my mind. I had a good garden - I had to get water from Alva Jordan's pump a few rods away. Wood for fuel, potatoes and milk were furnished. Father had not approved of Miner marrying me - I would never inherit anything - all my people had was kids!

(22:50)

Mother Scott had had a nervous breakdown - nervous prostration - about ten years before, and was subject to frequent spells, where she would be sick in bed for two or more days. My being right close by, it was easy to ask me to take over when she had a spell. I was glad to do it, and used the opportunity to ingratiate myself with Father Scott. I had noticed things about Mother's housekeeping that annoyed him. One thing was that the big milk cans were seldom washed until time to use them - take them to the barn at night. Father would often do them then, so I took pains to wash them right after breakfast dishes and put them out in the sun. I was soon happy to see that I was pregnant, but not happy with the severe nausea. I did not want them to

know it as I expected their disapproval. Fried salt pork was a regular food on the table. When cooking, the odor made me very ill. Picture Mother in bed, and I out on the back porch to heave is a picture that stays in my mind. I managed to keep it from them long as we were there. When the haying and oat harvest was done, Father decided he no longer needed Miner's help. We stored our goods back in my father's barn, moved in with my people, and Miner went back to selling the American Agriculturalist. Mama and I were both happy to be together during my first pregnancy. She had accepted Miner as a son when he first came to our house. As Miner was away weekdays, I fitted back in as Mother's helper with the younger children, and soon was busy and happy, making baby clothes.

(25:21-37:08. Marjorie repeats the wedding, honeymoon, Alfred home, staying with the Scotts)

In those days, babies were dressed quite differently than they are today. First the belly band, about 6 by 30 inches, wound tightly around the abdomen, and pinned with three or four small safety pins. It was important to use safety pins with guards on the coil to prevent snagging and maintain a firm pressure. Next was the diaper, folded into a triangle, made of birds-eye cotton or sometimes muslin or flannel. Then a vest or undershirt. This was often home-made, but Ruben's Double Front knit vests were just coming on the market. Now a pinning blanket, 20 by 30 inches, placed under baby's hips and pinned up into a bag in which he could kick freely but not be exposed. Up until three or four months, baby's dresses and petticoats extended well below their feet, shortened when they began to creep. The belly band, vest, pinning blanket and one petticoat, according to my mother's rules, must always be made of very fine, soft, all wool material. When baby was put into short dresses, full length all wool hose, pinned to the diaper leg opening. Dresses were always white, made of main?uk or possibly long cloth. Hoods, bonnets, sacks or jackets were crocheted or knitted. I did feather stitching in pink or blue serpentine on neck and sleeve bands of the nightie. I also added a kimono in bright pink. There was not the pink for girls distinction then as there is now, or has been recently. When Howard came, he was red, so the pink kimono didn't go too well with his complexion, but we used it anyway.

(39:37)

I consulted Dr. Bock, who was a young doctor in Hinsdale - he lived diagonally across the road from my parents so it was not far away - and when I was about six months pregnant he found that I had albumin in my urine, so I had to be put on a very strict diet and conform to his advice. I could have no meat nor eggs and certain restrictions - careful. The 28th of January I woke up, early in the morning - I don't remember just what time - and Mama woke up, and she said labor had started. We sent word to Miner, and Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday until Saturday I was in labor, up and down, some pain, but the doctor was trying to do everything he could to hurry it along but they didn't give drugs and do Cesarean sections like they do now, he just waited to let nature take its course. I had to take hot Sitz baths, go up and down the stairs, all kinds of things. Then Howard was born at 6 AM Saturday morning the 31st, and I had convulsions. Soon after his birth, I went into convulsions, and - I think the figure is correct - in two days I had 17 convulsions, 11 that first day, and was very, very sick. My mother acted as a midwife, and we had hired a girl to do the housework for Mama. But then they called another doctor from Olean,

and had a regular nurse, a registered nurse, came for ten days to take care of me after the convulsions. Then at the end of ten days I had so much fever - I told about that in the part about hospitals - how good I felt to get into the hospital. I was taken on a cot, the neighbors covered me up warm and carried me up to the Erie depot and put the cot and all up in the baggage car, and then the ambulance from the hospital met me in Olean. Dr. Mountain took charge of me in the hospital. Well, then in the hospital, I got better. I had a D and C and got better right away. And Theresa Fox was very, very good to me. She took pains to pump out my breasts every night so I kept my milk, so I was able to nurse Howard after I got back home.

(43:21)

In the spring we rented the downstairs of a house up the street, in 1914. We lived there about two years. As a wife, I was a disappointment to Miner. He was loyal and very patient with my moods. As a mother, I was devoted and followed my mother's child care methods. Marian and Mama were much help to me. My moods gradually improved, and in 1916 I found I was pregnant again. I was happy preparing lovely clothes for my little girl, all faith and optimism. Miner was most concerned as to my health, and so was my mother. I fell short of my duty as a wife here also. Mama sympathized with both of us - empathized with both of us. What a wonderful mother she was!

Thelma's birth was uncomplicated. She was healthy with lots of black hair. I gained some perspective by reading magazines - modern articles - and was more converted to modern methods. So I registered in The Ladies Home Journal Baby Club, a monthly instruction, which were very strict. There was to be no sucking of fingers or toes or anything - sometimes the sheet. There was to be no sucking, rocking, cuddling. Everything strictly on schedule. Three or four hours between feedings. A psychologist's opinion, given me years later, was that that completely upset Thelma's... another word the psychologist said - that she was "not properly bonded", and that that was what upset her whole psychology. I tried. I did what I thought was right. I tried, but it's been a question in my mind ever since the psychologist told me that - "Did I fail as a mother?" I did the best I could. Now.

But I thoroughly enjoyed Thelma. Her clothes, making her clothes and dressing her up. I was proud of her. It was all pleasure at the time. Miner was not too enthusiastic about having a family, but he tolerated her and was good to her. Everything was fine. Then, in a year and a half, in the spring of 1918, came Annabelle, The time when Annabelle was a baby was one of the happiest of my life. Miner had received appointment as a mail carrier, so we had a regular income, and he was home instead of being away from home all through the week. Because of Mama's death, we were making our own decisions. That was better for our relationship. Miner made the garden. All I did that spring was be a mother and wife.

In my memory I have kept a picture through the years. It's on an afternoon that spring. The children were taking their naps, and I'm ironing their little clothes and dresses. I had done the washing in the morning, and I was thinking and loving my babies and planning for the future. Then, when they woke up, I dressed them up, each one in their nice clean clothes, and we went out for a little outing, to go up to my father's house, which was not far up the street. Annabelle rode in the goat cart, which Thelma had had, and Thelma rode in a two-wheeled cart with a long

handle, and she was pulled by Howard and we went up to my father's house for a little visit and an afternoon outing.

(48:18)

This period, 1918-1920, was probably the most important turning point in my life. Mama had died in April, 1918. Up to that point, I was entirely dependent on her opinions and advice - I never made any decisions myself at all. In my concept, black was black and white was white. Everything was either right or wrong. My interest was in myself. I was all at sea when I could no longer lean on her. I want to give credit to Angeline Cave, who was my next door neighbor after we bought our home down the street. She was a great help to me in starting me to mature. She was older, a former school teacher, a Christian, experienced in ways of the world. She would listen to me, and give me advice and counsel. In the spring of 1919, we moved into the Carmer house, former boarding house. Travelers were sent to me, because there was no other place they could stop in town. One of the first ones I took in was a representative from the community Chautauqua - an entertainment and instruction project. Both Miner and I became involved with that and supported it in the ensuing years when it came back. I then joined the Red Cross, sponsored the C.S.T. and gradually became a philanthropist, who, according to Webster's, is one who loves and seeks to benefit mankind.

(51:21)

One of the first organizations I joined was the Hinsdale Improvement Society. We help with the Decoration Day service as the G.A.R. dwindled, we cared for the park, sponsored Old Home Days and started to provide playground equipment, but learned that because of laws about liability insurance we could not swing that. In the early days of that, we placed road signs "Speed Limit - 10 MPH". When my father saw them, he just laughed and said "Why make it any more bucolic than it already is!"

I also joined The Sunshine Society, Rebekah, Grange, Methodist Women, all the Methodist organizations. One of my first independent ventures was when the Pratt family, tenant farmers with a large family, lost their home and all contents by fire. I conceived the idea of making a quilt for them. So I prepared 12-inch squares of old muslin, probably from an old sheet, and then canvassed the village, asking each woman that would to make a crazy quilt block. I don't know if you know what a crazy quilt block is or not, so I will tell you - you took scraps of material of any shape or size, according to fancy, and sewed them neatly onto the square of muslin. And then the squares were sewed together and put a back on. And then they were all to meet at our house, and we tied the quilt and presented it to the Pratt family. A little point of interest that I remember is that while they were there tying the quilt, Thelma was sick with the chicken pox, and she laid on the couch, and she'd say "My chicken poxes hurt!" And Dolly Norton who was near her would bend over and say "You poor little girl!" But anyway, we tied that quilt and that was just a point of interest that I remember.

(54:07)

I never did any big, important thing - just little deeds of kindness and helpfulness which I could do. I got into politics, locally, just a little, when I was asked to run for town clerk on the Republican ticket. The incumbent, a Democrat, was excellent, no fault to be found. He lived in the village! My only ground for asking for votes was that he had had it so long that someone else should be given a chance. I canvassed house to house, the whole township, making new friends and learning much about how the other side lives. I loved it! He won by two votes! It would also be politics, I suppose, circulating petitions and helping my friend Elodine Baxter to obtain an appointment as postmaster. I also took the census in 1950.

When Home Bureau was formed in 1920, I was active in forming the Hinsdale unit and was appointed the Nutrition Leader. This was probably because I had been to Alfred and had done Home Ec. I went to Olean for instruction, then came home and taught the local group. I want to thank Clara Saylor. She helped me in doing this, because David was a baby and my family had moved to Buffalo, so I had no baby-sitter. So in order for me to be the nutrition leader, she offered to take care of David while I went to Olean and while I taught the class. So it was her help that made it possible for me to do that.

In 1936 we joined the First Baptist Church and I joined the Burden Bearers' class in Olean. That was an entirely new group of people to become acquainted with, which we went ahead and did, both of us. Miner sang in the choir, which made our life in the Baptist Church much more interesting and much broader. The choir had parties, once a month, sometimes in the private homes, or sometimes to go out somewhere. We lived in the old farm house then, with an attic, quite different then. They loved to come to our house. Miner would take them on hay rides. I remember one Halloween party at our house - we had a fortune teller up in the attic, and it was all kind of spooky like - it was stairs you could go up, and sit around, and they told fortunes. It was at that party, I think, that I spilled a piece of pumpkin pie with ice cream on it on Dr. House's pants, which caused quite a commotion, and we had a good laugh about it. He always took everything in his stride and had fun along with it. He made the remark once - he never saw a bunch of people that could have so much fun over absolutely nothing as that choir. It was as Miner's wife that I was included in this. I was also elected a deaconess of the church, and one of my duties was to call on the members in east Olean. I loved that, too.

(59:10)

Another venture of mine, in 1911, I had decided on marriage and motherhood as most important to me. By 1929 I had more or less proven myself along those lines. Dick, my youngest, was old enough for kindergarten and my personal ambition was beginning to stir, so I went to teacher training class in Olean. Thelma took over much of the housework as I promised her help for State Teachers when I had a job. By some standards I may have been judged as failing Miner in this. He was willing for me to go to teacher's training class and looked forward to the extra income. I taught two years across from Crosby's Dairy. Then came the Depression and scarcity of jobs of any kind, so the general sentiment was against married women being employed. But in 1942 and 43 I became part of the labor force, working at National Munitions in Eldred.

And soon after that, Gilbert Fairwell the superintendent of schools, came to me and asked me to teach on the Five Mile, which I did, because teachers were scarce then during the war. The winter of 1944 was very hard. The roads were blocked for three weeks or more over the hill where I usually went the way I got to school. Lyle Colley lived up above us on the Gile Hollow road, and he was one of the bus drivers for Hinsdale School. So he would stop and pick me up in the morning on his way down to Hinsdale School, and we went down to the school and then transferred to the school bus - the school bus which picked up some pupils on the Five Mile had to go way around by Fitch instead of going over the hill the same way I would. So that's why I went with him. We went then up to Fitch and then down the Five Mile until where he picked up the pupils. And then I had to wade a mile anyway through the snow to my school, which was one of the Humphrey districts. The fire was started, but it would be sputtering along because the wood had ice frozen on it, and the kindling didn't work too well. So it was slow heating up, but we made out. I decided then that I had had enough of teaching in a country school. My license allowed me to teach only in rural schools.

(1:02:56)

Accordingly, I went to St. Bonaventure's - took several courses over two or three years at St. Bonaventure's in education. So I continued my education in that way. I also went to some extension courses from Fredonia Teachers'. When Thelma transferred to Geneseo from Buffalo [1934], I had the idea of going to Geneseo with her, putting the boys, David and Dick in school there, renting rooms for light housekeeping. Our family would all come home Friday afternoon till late Sunday, stock up on food and take care of Miner. Miner's answer was a resounding "NO!!" So that ended my pursuit of a teaching career.

As the wife of a member of the National Rural Letter Carriers Association, I was asked to join their Auxiliary. Our object was to help our husbands and to be a force for good in our respective communities. I joined the Cattaraugus County unit when it was first formed. That included membership in state and national. We had county meetings every spring and fall, state conventions once a year, and national convention once a year. I held various offices, becoming New York State president in 1958. My work in this organization greatly broadened my horizons. Miner was pleased and supported me loyally. It took us to meetings all over New York State, and to national conventions. We made many friends. By correspondence, we made friends with the state president of Montana, and when we went west we visited them. They were lovely people. All of the rural carriers as a group are fine, Christian people, dedicated to service and the best in life.

(1:05:43)

On our visit to Conrad in 1960, we were camping and we had been invited to stop and visit them, so we called on the telephone when we got there - we didn't know just when we would arrive - on a Sunday afternoon. They lived in the village, but they owned a big spread of land - wheat fields, acres outside, and their son lived out there. And they were camping, they were out there over the weekend. So they said for us to come out there, and we came, and we went in and ate with them. Then they invited us up to stay - we didn't have any hard schedule to fill - they urged us to stay, and we stayed three or four days. We got to ride on the combine - they

were combining wheat - it was a wonderful experience! We enjoyed it so much, and then they invited us in to their home in the village where they entertained us, I think three days that we spent there then.

When we located in the trailer park - 5-8-oh- in Dunedin, Florida, of course we joined the Members Association, and I became active there. The setup was - 5-8-Oh was a small park, the owners were in debt on the purchase price, but anxious to improve facilities and make it a happy community. The residents were cooperative. If we, the group, desired certain things, it would be discussed with the management. They would furnish some cash or material, and we would help with the work. I was one of the younger ones, so was better able to refinish tabletops, wax the floor of the rec hall for dancing, and so forth. It was a happy time, very happy.

1:08:17)

Now I am a member of a different community - Eden Heights. Nobody can understand what it means to a person to find him or her self in a place like this until it is experienced. I am content, and I try to be an optimist, always emphasizing the bright side. I am willing to listen to anyone, whatever their life. Many of us need to be listened to. I do. I still keep in touch with friends from each group that I have associated with through the years. Many rural carriers and their wives, some from 5-9-8-Oh trailer park, and different ones.

(1:09:10)

I will now consider my concept of myself as a person.

My deep religious belief in the basic teachings of Christianity - that God so loved the world He gave His only begotten son - were given me by my parents, my Sunday School teachers and school teachers. Next to that, I think that determination - very strong will - is my strongest trait, which can be either good or bad. It can be plain stubbornness, of which I have often been guilty. Or on the other hand, it can be the God-given power by which we soar. It is by using these natural tendencies that we develop our own personalities. I think my first concept of myself as a person was that I was a good little girl. Very soon came the idea that I was physically inferior to my sister Marian. This I accepted philosophically, early, when I went to school... ..because I could compete scholastically. I then tended to become self-righteous, prejudiced. I remember I made some derogatory remark to someone in Mama's presence. She corrected me - telling me that I was 'so blunt.' 'It is the truth!' I answered. She said 'The truth, even the truth, is not to be spoken at all times.' That gave me much food for thought. As the years passed, I became more and more tolerant, and I've had to accept many facts regarding my own family that 75 years ago would have been soundly condemned. Today I love people, love to share their experiences, and try to analyze them. More flies have been caught by molasses than ever have by vinegar. I read Positive Thinking by Norman Vincent Peale when it first came out. Its principles, along with St Paul's advice - "whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." - have been a guide to me ever since. I am generous with time and effort, but frugal in money matters. I love to entertain. I always enjoy making Christmas gifts,

There's a story I have been told about my great-grandmother Witter. She raised a family of ten children and there were that many more that she gave a home to for part of the time. She was always generous, always set a good table, always had a garden, and if she had anything over, that nobody needed, she packed it up and took it to Olean and sold it. Through the years, I have usually appeared calm - sometimes phlegmatic - on the surface, but have always had deep emotions inside. Love and sympathy, and also anger if anyone was wronged. That is why I would interfere, bringing my father's anger to myself if I thought he was being harsh with one of the younger children.

There was one incident occurred sometime after 1914, after I was married and away from home. We were living in the Flat house, just up the street from my people. I did not have as good laundry facilities as my mother, but brought my family laundry down to my mother's to do. The Methodist Episcopal church was holding revival meetings. My father was concerned because I had boarded the evangelist and Mama had allowed Marian to attend the meetings, which were critical of Papa's beliefs. The scene is: the family at the dinner table, our Aunt Gerty, a guest. I was doing laundry in the kitchen. Papa was considering going out calling on people to defend his beliefs. He turned to Marian and began criticizing her for attending the meetings and go on VERY hard. Aunt Gerty spoke up in Marian's defense. Of course, I was listening. When I had heard enough, I grabbed the dishpan, dipped it in the rinse water, took it in the dining room, and doused my father!

Mama said.... "Whyyyyy Marjorie!" Then silence. Both Mama and Papa left the table and went in the bedroom, and in a few minutes they came back to the table, Papa apologized to Aunt Gertie and Marian for losing his temper and asked their forgiveness. That is the kind of man my father was.

(1:15:13)

I am romantic. I like to read a good clean romance or dream up imaginary ones. A beautiful relationship developed between Bill McCluer and me - after we were both past 90 years old - satisfied my romantic longing. We agreed from the first that neither of us was interested in remarriage. We both were maintaining our own homes and had income, children and some property. He was very depressed, having recently lost his third dearly beloved wife and one of his four sons. Another son was very ill with cancer at the time, so he desperately needed a true, understanding friend. This I was able to be. We corresponded regularly, and during good driving weather he came up from Titusville to see me about every three weeks. It is a hundred mile drive one way. He would rent a room and breakfast, usually Saturday afternoon till Monday. We were so happy to be together, sharing a love of beauty, nature, music, poetry, form. Our backgrounds were very similar, also religion - he was a Methodist. We had the school days at Alfred, our ideas of propriety, respectability and so forth were also similar. This beautiful friendship and love we enjoyed for about a year and a half until May and June, 1987, he met with an auto accident which resulted in his death. It was God's perfect answer to a difficult situation. We had grown very close. He was 94, no longer competent to drive back and forth or to properly keep house and care for himself. I still did not feel I could give up my friends, church and family and go to Titusville.

(1:17:43)

One of the things we very much enjoyed doing together was visiting and caring for Miner's and Laura's graves. I loved Laura because he did - I wanted to make him happy. I would like to analyze the feelings that existed between Bill and me. It was always referred to as friendship. My dictionary says "A friend is one who loves." We did love, deeply and truly, but it was not marital love, which includes sex. The first time he came into my house, he said - before he was scarcely in the door - "Do you have the old Kanakadeas? I don't know what became of mine, and I'd love to look at them." Of course I did have them, and had been wishing I knew somebody, still alive, somebody I could contact that could go through the old Kanakadeas together. So I got them out, and we sat on the sofa, and browsed away through the Kanakadeas. Immediately I was thrilled - recalling common remembrances and events and our ideals and backgrounds - so very, very similar. My son David called, while we sat there looking at it, and I said to my son - "I'm looking over the old Kanakadeas with an Alfred schoolmate, having the time of my life!"

The first Christmas after we had renewed our acquaintanceship, he sent me a card. The printed verse on it said "May our friendship never change, and may it always stay as happy and as special as it is for us today. And through the years that follow, may every day you spend bring all the happiness deserved, such a special friend. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year." - Bill. And then he wrote on, "How very blessed we are, that we can enter into the Christmas spirit, even after the loss of dear ones. My very special thoughts and wishes are always with you this Christmas time. With God's blessing, Bill."

(1:20:32)

It is now the 23rd of March, 1990. I've been very slow in recording these tapes. The electronic age is just beyond me. I could not have done it had it not been for the help of my wonderful friend and former neighbor, Francis Sprague/Spring. I now want to finish this third tape. I have thought long and seriously about my personality. Perhaps it would be more accurate to consider independence my outstanding trait. It is still sometimes difficult for me to accept gracefully the many favors which are given me.

Now I would like to recall some past memories. One very happy one is of Grandpa Witter taking me with him to the sugar bush, a group of maple trees way back up on the hill. We would have ridden on either a bobsled or a stone boat, horse drawn. There is something about being in the open spaces, in contact with nature, especially when the seasons are changing, which still thrill me. As soon as we arrived at the scene of action, I was allowed to run around and peek into the sap buckets, have a drink of sap, and then watch the process. There was a flat pan, perhaps four feet by eight feet, sitting on a stone arch the same size, partly filled with boiling liquid. It is necessary to boil away perhaps forty or fifty gallons of water to produce one gallon of maple syrup. In a good run of sap, it was sometimes necessary to boil day and night to take care of it. The fire was set on the open end of the arch. Keeping a good supply of cut wood on hand was an important part of the process.

By this experience, I was conditioned, so that in the spring of 1927, after we had purchased the Will Gile farm, including a sugar bush and equipment, I just HAD to take my 18-month-old Dick, the horse and wagon, and go up the hill. My operation was crude. I just gathered up dead branches for fuel. There was already inside the house the equipment, so we had shelter if it stormed, but the arch was out in the open. I fixed a bed in a storage tank lying on its side for Dick to take his nap. Miner always came and helped me when he was through with the mail, but I was the one who WANTED to do it - the driving force to carry on, year by year, enlarging the operation until we had modern equipment and regular customers for syrup. Tons of people shared that special joy with me. It is alive with them still. I just recently received a card from a friend, David's girlfriend during the war 40 some years ago - spent the night with me boiling overnight, and we just talked so intimately and enjoyed each other so much. She came to see me but didn't find me at home just recently. Because of her memory of that night together up in the woods.

And there's others, too, that have shared so many experiences. There was one Easter morning that was one of the greatest mountain-top experiences of my life. I had boiled all night, alone, and I went out, juuuust as the day was dawning and looked off toward the east, across the valley, as the day was just beginning to dawn, and I was so in tune with the infinite, so thrilled, so really in the presence of God, its one of, well, as I say, a mountain top experience of my life.

My children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and many others spent happy and learning times with me in the sugar bush. After the sugar house was built, I had it fixed up with all the comforts of home. A work bench with straw tick and blankets to make a bed, boxes nailed up in the corner to hold dishes, and some food supplies and tools. We boiled eggs in the sap, baked potatoes in the ashes in the ash pit, made stews and so forth in a covered iron skillet under the fire in the ash pit. The sugar house was built of new lumber, boarded up. This gave us plenty of space to write any message we wished. Each different party of visitors usually wrote up something special. When the sugar house was being built, I had broken my nose riding down hill on my toboggan. I ran into a tree. Written on the wall - I expect it still says - Marjorie bets Fred [Gile] that she will still ride down the hill, Nelly-ka-bump, when she will be 86 years old. But I didn't!

(1:27:13)

When I was 86, I lived on Fulton Street in Olean, and my activity was quite limited. Another way in which I show my basic interest in Nature and all her ways is in my interest in all growing vegetation. Early memories include roaming the woods and fields with Aunt Ruby finding where different things grew: trailing arbutus, hepatiphyis, bloodroot, violets, purple and yellow. Our teacher in school had a contest - who could bring in any flower or plant the earliest in the spring. Different people brought in different things, and somebody brought dandelions and things, but I found xxxx which is a trailing vine with blue blossoms on it. That was my contribution to this contest. I was also very conscious of our soft maple tree which had red buds. All the other maples around our house were hard maples and didn't have the red blooms on. I was conscious of the bomkillia tree up at Grandpa Witters that had bigger leaves, that was different than ordinary trees, and the pine tree that the top was come out, and my mother was indignant

that somebody had cut the top out of that pine - that was a shame! I always thought about it. I knew where the violets grew over on Wood's flat - that's where all the town children went to pick violets.

And we found that down below Hinsdale, on the Norton farm the grass was thicker and deeper, and some of the stems on the violets were longer. They were more valuable in our sight. So one Saturday my sister Marian and I hurried around to get our work done, so we could go down there and pick violets. It was probably 3/4ths of a mile, and after dinner we got the dinner dishes done and we went down. We got nicely to work picking violets and my father appeared in a horse and buggy and ordered us home! So we went home and we had to make our bed over, we hadn't done a good job making our bed - we just pulled the covers up. That didn't pass, we had to come back and make it. That was the reason I remembered that particularly.

I also knew where the spearmint and peppermint grew along the brook, and later where the leeks and watercress and cowslips grew by the creek up on our own farm. I was fascinated to watch Papa plant early vegetables - lettuce, radish, onions. Quite young, I planted morning glories along the porch in Hinsdale, at seven or eight, and from then on I usually had more and more garden, usually working out the soil with my hands before planting. I loved to get my hands in the dirt. When I got into high school, I took Botany my first year in high school. Our teacher was Mr. Sprague, who was very good and he showed us things in actual practice. We went on field trips often and I learned to identify many field weeds that you might not ordinarily know. It gave me much information which I have used ever since. On these field trips we learned to identify families of plants by leaf formation, parts of the flower, seeds and so forth.

1989 - Audiotape with Dan Trail

Recorded by Dan trail, transcribed by Tim Robinson

Dan: This is Grandma Scott here, and Dan Trail. Great-grandmother Scott. We're sitting here in front of this tape recorder today, and she wants to tell us some things about when she was a very little girl, in the interests of history and of all of our interests. Go ahead, Grandma! Tell us something!

Marjorie: Well, where I was born was on Congress Street, out of Hinsdale, east of Hinsdale, in the house which my great-grandfather built, about 1845. I'll tell you a little bit about the house. It was two uprights, connected by a wing. An unusual appearing house, but my grandfather built the one upright and the wing first, and then the story goes that my grandmother was such a poor housekeeper that he couldn't stand it, so he built the other upright for his private quarters. That's the story that I hear. My grandmother was very intellectual, taught school for 16 years, loved to read, to gain knowledge and all that, rather than keep house.

My earliest recollections

My mother was the center of everything, naturally. And we lived in this house, in part of it, in one wing. The original upright was reserved for my grandmother, but she really lived with us. She went in there sometimes. It was her part, but she lived right in with us. She always had stories to tell us. She didn't help with the work - it was in her late 70s. Normally, we work, but she didn't. She was Grandma, and set in a chair and rocked the babies and told us stories, played cat's-cradle with us and things of that sort. She was naturally a very important part of my life.

(2:40)

And then my father was a traveling salesman, so he was only home on the weekends, and there's only a few memories that I have of him, really. One was when I had a pair of new shoes, and I set up on his lap, and he put the shoes on me I think, and I looked at my feet and felt so proud! And he agreed with me about the importance of new shoes. And the other was about one Christmas, I received a little gold ring, and I remember sitting on his lap, and he put the ring on my finger.

(3:32)

And another important part of my memory, beside my father and mother and grandma, of course would be my sister, two years younger than me, my sister Marian, and then later, when my brother Lewis was born, but that's later.

Another very important influence in my earliest recollections is the Methodist Sunday school. I went to Sunday school from the very earliest time I can remember, and I was taught the Golden Text, and I must know my Golden Text before I went to Sunday School, and my teacher and the other little girls and boys that were in the class with me I remember distinctly.

And then I want to tell you about an adventure - this was an adventure I had. There was a stairway that went up from our kitchen, but there was no cellar stairs under it. It was one that was closed in. It was a closet, but you could crawl way back in. And one day I went back in - of course 'twas dark. I crawled way back in there. I found some colored bottles. Well, I just thought that I had found a treasure! I remember distinctly sitting back there and sort of handling over those bottles, and looking at them. But Mama didn't like me bringing them out, I had to come back out and leave them in there, but that was a real adventure to crawl back in there in the dark.

(5:29)

And then another thing that I remember from very early is - one time I went in my grandmother's part. I was crawling on the floor - I couldn't have been very old - and under the window there was a bee on the floor. She had a flowered Brussels carpet - I remember those pink roses on the carpet - and I was crawling along across it, and under the window I found a bee, and I tried to pick it up, and it stung me! I went crying to Mama - "A bumble-bee buzz bit my finger!" And another thing was - we used to have a rag man, a linen and cotton worn cloth, the fabric was saved for the rag man - and was made into paper.

So we always had flour sacks, empty flour sacks to put the clothes in, and then a rag man would come along with a cart on the back of his wagon and tin-ware in it, and you could take your eggs out, and he'd weigh them on the scale, and tell you how much it came to, and you could pick out a piece of tin-ware. So I went out with my mother and watched the proceedings, and she got a pie tin, a bright shiny pie tin and handed it to me, and I carried it in the house proudly. Well, after we got in there, she told me to - she took it away from me, and gave it to my sister Marian who was sitting up in the high chair and was sort of fussing, so she gave the pie tin to the baby to play with. Well, I did, but I didn't like it. I thought that was my pie tin - she'd given it to me and it was my pie tin. And I remember standing back, and looking at my sister and that pie tin. I walked up and pushed her over.

Dan Trail: Uh-oh! No! Grandma, it's hard to believe you'd do such a thing! What was your mom's reaction?!

My mother said "Why Marjorie!" She was shocked, because usually I was a good little girl. She talked to me, I don't remember - I don't think she spanked me, but her method of discipline was to reason, and she explained to me how bad that was. I felt real guilty, and conscience-stricken. So that was the end of that. That illustrates how my mother disciplined us.

(9:07)

In one corner of our sitting room we had what was called a what-not. It's a stand, a row of shelves to display souvenirs, and statuettes, and one thing and another. And when I'd go up to it, I'd been taught to leave it alone. And I'd go up and stand in front of it, and put my hands behind me, and say "No, no! Mustn't touch!" The way my mother told it for years afterward, when my younger sister got up - two years old, maybe - she'd run right up to it and climb up to the top! So that was the difference between us, and the difference in the way that we responded to our mother's instructions or advice. She would say "Good little girls don't do that." So I took it very seriously, and I was a good little girl, so I did what my mother told me. Not that I was always a saint, but that was my outlook on life - "Why, good little girls don't do things like that, so I won't do it!"

Dan Trail: Grandma, listen, if you were a good little girl, and your sister Marian was a scalawag, how did you two get along?

Well, I think I would say that I was philosophical about it. I'll tell you another incident that illustrates it. When my brother Lewis was a baby, my mother was changing him, and Marian and I both stood there, and she said "Will one of you girls go get me clean diapers" out in the other room where clean diapers were kept. So we both started, Marian ran out, came back with a diaper, and I was only as far as the door. And Mama spoke about it "Well, Marian goes and gets back when you're just started." So I was not only a good little girl, but I was slow, and I was fat. And they called me Pudgy, but I accepted it that's the way I was, and she was quicker than I was, and could do things, well she was prettier than I was too, but I just accepted it, that was my way, that's the way 'twas!

(12:22)

I was going to say that when my brother Lewis was born, I was not quite four, and I was sent to my grandmother's house to stay with my aunt, and my Grandma Witter came and took care of Mama. Well, when he was probably a week old, I don't know exactly, why I was taken home, and walked in to the bed - Mama was in bed yet, of course, then they stayed in bed for two weeks, at least - and walked in to the crib, and looked at him, and I looked up, and said "Oh, isn't he beautiful!" Grandma began to laugh, and Mama kinda laughed too, and Grandma said "Why, I think he's the homeliest baby I ever saw!"

(13:28)

In the spring before I was five [1899], we moved to a different house down in the Oil Creek valley where we spent the summer. There's not too much that happened there, but I remember a few things. The whole family had whooping cough, that was Marian and Lewis and I, and our Grandma Norton along with us, and we'd go out and stand on the edge of the porch and heave up most every meal, sometimes during the meal! And I remember going up on the hill, something about gathering chestnut leaves, that was supposed to make a tea and be good for whooping cough.

And another thing I remember is - my brother Lewis was one year old then. When we were at the table, he sat in his high chair, and he would cry and reach and cry and reach, and we couldn't make out what the trouble was, and finally my Grandma Norton said "Well, I think he wants to feed himself." And so Mama got a dish and spoon, and that was what he wanted - he'd been crying to feed himself. Which was a little bit early, or was considered a little bit early anyway.

(14:55)

I remember, there was a spring - we got our water from a spring, oh several rods from the house, out across the field to get this water, and I remember one time, my father had been working with the horses, and came by the house, and he let me ride on the horse while we went out to the spring, and the horse drank from the spring.

One day a horse and buggy drove up in front of the house, and there was a little girl in the car, just about my age! I was very interested in that, and the talk was that she and her parents had lived in that house just before we did, and they were talking about something they'd left, and I was impressed by this little girl that was just my age, and her name was Ada Rose. Now, presently, Ada Rose Neil is one of my very best friends, but that was my first introduction to her.

When it came Thanksgiving time - oh, there were men who'd been drilling an oil well just right near us, and my mother boarded these men, so that they overshadowed our lives through that summer. They got some gas, so the gas was piped to our house, and we put what they called a gas log in the kitchen stove, and were burning gas for a while. At Thanksgiving, Grandpa and Grandma Witter, Aunt Ruby and Uncle Jay were all at our house for Thanksgiving dinner, and the turkey in the oven, and all going on fine, and the gas went out - that was the end of it. So they had to hurry around and get some wood and take the gas log out and build a fire to finish the Thanksgiving dinner.

We lived in that place only a few months, and in the fall, we moved into our Grandfather Witter's house in the village of Hinsdale. This was quite a change for me, or for all of us, in our life style. We had running water. Not indoor plumbing, but cold water in a faucet, and in a sink, and I had playmates nearby. One little boy across the road especially that was a little bit younger than I, and we could walk to the store, just a little ways to the bakery, and the post office and to different stores, grocery stores. So that was quite different, living in the village. And things that I remember about that winter - my brother Lewis was very ill, he had Bright's Disease. The doctor came to see him every day, and I remember standing by and listening to what the doctor said, and it was fear for his life for several days. But he recovered. I remember about the Horlich's Malted Milk, the doctor recommended that to build him up, and that made an impression on my mind. I could have some of the Horlich's Malted Milk sometimes... but that was an event.

(18:53)

For Christmas, I got a book about three little kittens that lost their mittens, and I remember reading it - well, not reading it but Mama reading it to me - and I looked at the pictures and said the rhymes over again, and we got milk oh, across the road and up a little ways - up across what was called the town square was the place where we got milk - and I got the milk. I said to my mother one day - it was Mrs. Bowen - "Don't you think Mrs. Bowen might like to read that book?" and Mama said "Well, I think maybe she might." so I took The Three Little Kittens with me when I went up to get the milk, and I said to Mrs. Bowen that she might like to read that book, so I left it with her. She was very gracious and talked with me - I liked her very much - and she had a daughter that lived with her that made of me, so I loaned her the book, and then probably the next day why I took it home. That was important to me.

(20:08)

Another thing that happened to me that winter - from somewhere or other, from schoolchildren or where, we weren't quite sure - how we got head lice. Mama was combing my hair one day, she said "Well, you were itching your head an awful lot, I'm going to give you a shampoo." She was combing my hair that day. Oh, she gasped. She began combing with a fine comb. I had head lice. Well, she got rid of them all right. I THINK she used kerosene oil. But anyway, they were cleaned up all right. That was also an event.

And this little boy that lived across the road, I played with him a lot, we played all kinds of things. It was a little bit later, one time, I'll tell about him, we were playing house. Of course, he was the father and I was the mother. I was busy getting a meal and I said something to him. He sat with a newspaper bottom side up in front of him, I said something to him, and he said "Keep still! Can't you see I'm reading the paper!?" Well, that pleased Mama, she had a great laugh about that!

(21:37)

I remember New Years Eve, 1900. I didn't sit up late, but I remember a great deal of talk about it. It was the turn of the century, and the older people were going to sit up and watch the old year out and the new year in. That's very clear in my mind.

In the fall of 1901 I was ready to start school. My mother had already taught me at home. I was seven years old. I had a primer when I was five, with stories in it about Ben and his sled, and so forth, different things about a hen. And one time, I came to the word B E N, Ben, and Mama said "If H E N is hen, what's B E N?" I hesitated a minute and said "Rooster!" I was ready for the second grade when I went to school. I went right into the second grade, I had learned enough at home. For my first day of school, Mama made me a pink chambray sailor suit trimmed with white braid. I remember at home standing, looking, it had a tie, a necktie made of the chambray, looking down at it and getting the tie tied just right, ready for school on the first day.

After I'd started school, we were going to have gymnasium, and I had to have a pair of sneakers, and that was an important event, something entirely different! To have sneakers! My teacher was Nellie Green, who before that had been a close friend of my mother's, so it was something different. I had referred to her as Nellie, but when I went to school, I must always say Miss Green and must no longer address her by her first name!

(24:08)

One day - I don't know why, I loved school, always - for some reason, I decided I didn't want to go that morning, and my mother took me out the door, and said "You go on to school." I sat down on the doorstep. She let me sit there a minute, and then she came and sort of paddled me along out to the sidewalk. There was a step up from our sidewalk to the main sidewalk. When she went back, I sat down again on the main sidewalk. Well, then she came out and paddled me until I went to school. That was an unusual performance, because usually I meekly obeyed whatever she told me to do, but I remember that one time.

I had several friends in school. My closest friend was probably Dorothea Lippert, who lived with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Cashon, just diagonally across the road from our house and we played together all the time. She was in the same grade with me, and after school she would come in and help me fill the woodbox. One of my chores was to fill the woodbox after I got home from school, and then I could go and play. So she'd come in and help me fill the woodbox, and then I could go over to her house and play, or could play at our house. Another one was Mildred Goodrich. Her mother was the teacher of our Sunday School class, and so I had known her for quite a while, and we became good friends. She lived down the hill, farther from us. And then Frances Wood - we bought our milk from Mr. Wood, Staley Wood, and they lived over across the Flats, beyond the Pennsylvania Depot, and then it was my job to go after the milk, at night, and I could go early, and play with Frances for a while.

(26:39)

I well remember - her mother made salt rising bread. And that gave a certain sort of aroma to the house which was new, and rather fascinating to me, and there were different things. Their

home was different than ours, nicer in some ways. I enjoyed those trips. I usually had to wait a while, till they brought in the milk, and strained it, and put it in the pail for me, and then walked back home. And also, she was in school, and in the same room with me, anyway - she might have been a grade ahead. She would sit with me and visit, and we'd write notes back and forth. One day, she talked about - Arthur Lockwood was her fellow, he was a young man, out of school, but that was her idea. She says "Who's your fellow?" I thought a while, and then I said "Oh, Warren Irwin's my fellow." He was a minister's son, about my age. Well, that was a note. My friend Dorothea got hold of the note, some way or another, and took it home to her mother, and her mother came over and talked to my mother, and I received a SERIOUS lecture that little girls did NOT have 'fellows' and I must never think such a thought or say any such thing that Frances Wood was not a good girl to think such ideas.

(28:34)

The first two years that I was in school Max Torrey, fresh out of Normal School, was the principal. He was full of ideas, and insisted upon the lower grade teachers conforming to his ideas, more or less. One of his ideas, innovations, was to establish what now would be called a physical education course. Then we just called it Gym. The gym was upstairs in the second story, over the school rooms in the town building. Wands were purchased, and dumbbells and some aerial equipment, and we went up regularly for classes, and we learned what was probably a schottische, it was called 'heel and toe', to march and turn sort of thing, and this schottische - which was a dance - and there was one of the pupils whose parents refused to let him do that because it was a dance. They didn't believe in dancing. So Mr. Torrey met opposition in many places and was very determined. That was an important part of the school picture at that time. But I loved the gym, and the marching. Keeping time was very, very pleasant to me.

We also played games out in the schoolyard in front of the school. Some of them were making leaf houses. Well, you should say made house plans with rows of leaves. We would bring our rakes from home and get there early, to fix up our leaf houses, and brought rugs and put down in our sitting room. Lot's of fun, playing in the leaves. And we also played Pussy Wants a Corner and Moving Statues and different games out in the schoolyard. Drop the Handkerchief.

Decoration Day was a very, very important part of our school life. Each child was to make a wreath at home to carry to the cemetery on Decoration Day. So before Decoration Day came, we'd be watching the lilacs to see if they would be out, and hunting around for what flowers we could find, and ferns and evergreens to make our wreaths. Each one of us carried a wreath, and also carried a flag. We went up to the school square before 1 o'clock and were lined up. We chose our partners - who we were going to march with, we marched two by twos. We had our partners chosen ahead of time and were lined up, up in front of the school house. Each one was given a small flag to carry, and their wreath, and went up into the town hall over the school rooms for the exercises.

Blanche Bandefield always gave a recitation, and they read the list of soldiers that served from Hinsdale. A very memorable service. The Caverly Family orchestra always played and we sang patriotic songs and then we would march down, and march all the way to the Maplehurst

Cemetery which was about a mile. And then the veterans would tell us where to put our flags and where to put ourreviviaql wreaths, and direct us, up there. The veterans always wore their uniforms, and they had a drum - two drums - and a fife. Will Gould played the fife, Mark Pierce played the snare drum, and Peter Cashin beat the bass drum. So we marched, and that stayed with us for years. It made a great impression on our minds, all of us. When we were older, and living there in Hinsdale, we clung to the idea of preserving that, as long as we could. But of course, when we got automobiles running hither and yon and hard surfaced roads, it was not safe for children to march that mile. I want to add a note about the veterans, Dan asked me, from what war? They were veterans of the Civil War, and were middle aged, but not really old men.

(34:18)

One Christmas I received double runner skates. We went to the canal down by the old blacksmith's shop, or the Oil Creek to skate. I loved it! Later, when I was twelve years old, I received groove skates. In the winter, Marian and I would like to go outside. I wanted to play Fox and Geese or such a game. By the time we had made the trek, Marian would start crying "I'm cold! I want to go in!" Of course, that disgusted me, because I wanted to stay out. The spring floods which covered the flats and necessitated dynamiting ice above the railroad trestle were exciting and interesting. We would walk along the high sidewalk to view the water. I always became a bit dizzy watching it so hung onto the railing. There were raised, or high, sidewalks across the lowest land, both to the Pennsy depot and toward Maplehurst. We all loved to play croquet and spent many hours thus. All three families, Peirces, Dorothea's family and we had croquet courts.

(35:40)

I was always quite clothes conscious. I remember the blue coat and hood with red ribbons that my mother made me -when about four - from her wedding dress, dyed. Three and a half to four inch crocheted lace on my petticoat, new blue jackets and felt hats with streamers which we had later, then red reefers and red stocking caps for winter. A turkey-red jumper to be worn with white blouse. We always had a white dress with ribbon sash and hair bows for Sunday school, pink for me and blue for Marian. One vest for the summer and a good wool dress for winter. Also a school dress. We often but not always wore aprons to school - sometimes dainty white ones, sometimes checked gingham.

In my day, there were three rooms and three teachers in the Hinsdale Union School. Primary - grades 1-4, Miss Green, and then Miss Wiley, teacher. Intermediate - grades 6-8, and high school, the principal, Mr. Torrey. Then Mr. Vincent, and Mr. Sprague. In the fall of 1905, I entered the Intermediate department. In order to go on to high school, we had to pass Regents (state) examinations in so-called preliminary subjects: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Arithmetic, English, and a bit later, United States History. The teacher was allowed leeway as to what grade level these might be taken. In June of the sixth grade, 1906, all of us took, and I think passed, Geography. I also did Reading, Writing, Spelling, and, after some thought, English. That left Arithmetic and U S History. The rule was that a pupil was permitted to sit in high school and take high school subjects also, though lacking two preliminary subjects. So, in the fall of

1906 I entered high school. I want to add that Nellie Green had changed from the Primary to the Intermediate department, so she was my teacher and she was a rusher, she crammed the subjects and pushed you ahead as fast as she could. That was how it happened, that I got up there so soon.

The new principal, Mr. Sprague, came to our house to interview me in late August. I was barefoot, out in the kitchen washing dinner dishes when he came. I took time to pull on some stockings before going into the sitting room. It would be improper to be seen in public at my age with BARE LEGS!

1989 07 04 - Audiotape with Sue Covello (Witter)

Recorded by Sue Covello, transcribed by Tim Robinson

Marjorie: My grandmother (Lucy Ellen Norton, AKA "Ella") went to Friendship Academy, which was equal to going to college now, and she had a friend there named Bella Dyer. And through Bella Dyer, and friendship with her, she (Ella) met Oscar Dyer, and he - well, they fell in love, anyway. We never knew very much about him. But the few little stories about him, I will tell.

My great-grandmother Norton (Mary Ermina Norton) went to visit her daughter (Ella) in Friendship over the weekend, and went to church with her, and after church saw her (Ella) talking to this real dark-complected girl (Bella Dyer), and she said she wondered who that real dark girl was, that her daughter Ellen knew.

And Ellen brought her over and introduced her then to grandpa (Nelson Ira Norton) and grandma (Mary Ermina Norton) as her friend, Miss Dyer, and it was through her that my grandmother (Ella) met my grandfather (Oscar Dyer).

And it developed that they were very much in love. My mother (Belle Witter) had some letters of hers (Ella), some love letters, that they wrote before they were married, that were in my mother's bureau drawer. She gave me permission to read them when I was about 16. How romantic it was!

After Mama (Belle) died (1918), probably, they were destroyed. We went through all of the things like that in her dresser drawer. I suppose they were probably thrown out.

[Editor's note: It isn't clear who Bella Dyer is - maybe an endearment of Elizabeth Dyer?]

13:20

Anyway, they were married. And another story that we know - he had been in the Civil War. My mother (Belle Witter) was born in 1870. They (Oscar and Ella) were married 1867, or 68, and they had a little girl (Eva Dyer) who was two years old when my mother was born. The two year old and my mother was the family. My mother (Belle) was born in May, and in August, her two year old sister and her mother, both got dysentery. And they both died with the dysentery.

So my Grandma Dyer (Ella) was the oldest in my Great Grandmother Norton's (Mary Ermina Norton) family, so my Great-grandmother Norton took my mother (Belle) and brought her up. Her (Mary Ermina Norton) youngest child was my Uncle Jim (James Norton), who was about six years old at the time. So my mother was brought as a Norton in the Norton family as their youngest child. Well then the following February, her father (Oscar) died... from something, I don't know if it was malarial fever or something connected with the Civil War.

But my [great]grandpa Norton (Nelson I. Norton) would never apply for a pension. He was independent. He didn't need any pension - he could bring up his grand-daughter, so they could have gotten quite a pension, probably, but [great]grandpa Norton would never apply for that.

MEC: So grandpa (Oscar) Dyer fought in the Civil War?

Yes. Grandpa (Oscar) Dyer fought in the Civil War. I got his records from Washington, and he has a Civil War gravestone, and my grandma (Ella) Dyer, on her grave, has the Civil War.

MEC: Where are they buried?

Hinsdale Maplehurst Cemetery, just - not very far inside the gate. There's a Norton monument, it's on the Norton plot. There's room for seven graves. That's where [great] grandma Norton's buried too, and Grandpa Norton.

MEC: Are Ora and Belle Witter there?

No. The Witter lot is over in a different section. This is the old section where the Nortons are buried.

One other thing that we know about Grandpa Dyer was about his enlistment. One Sunday when I was about 7 or 8 years old - in church we always had Memorial Sunday the Sunday nearest to Decoration Day and had a very patriotic service - so the sermon that Sunday was for Civil War veterans that were honored. And this Sunday our pastor was telling about when President Lincoln called the three hundred thousand volunteers, and the song was written We Are Coming Father Abraham, three hundred thousand strong. He made it very dramatic! He was in Friendship, and they were calling for volunteers - "Who'll be the first?! Who'll be the first to come and sign the roll, and answer Father Abraham's call?!" And he said "A fine looking young man walked up the aisle and wrote his name - Oscar R Dyer!"

Well Mama pretty near jumped out of her seat! After church she said "Elder Carryer, Oscar Dyer was my father!" "Oh, Sister Witter!" he said, "I had no idea that anybody here knew anything about Oscar Dyer!" Well, she did. We know that he was a fine looking young man and very patriotic and walked up the aisle and signed the roll in Friendship!

Sue: Could we take a minute to catch that song you were singing yesterday about Alfred?
[laughter]

I'm reported to be a good sport and I make a fool of myself for anybody that asks me to [hearty laughter] because I love young people and I love to laugh and I like to tell a joke, even if it's on me! Well, this is a song we used to sing at Alfred, and we were looking at pictures yesterday,

and we were looking at a picture of a team of oxen and a procession of people, and President Davis, who was President of Alfred University when we went there. We went there just after the Ag School was started. So I started in with this song we sang in Ag School and that was written at the time of the founding of it. It's sort of a part of Alfred University... I know I can't sing!

20:21

Sue: Well, I don't think there are many people nowadays that would know the words to that, or the music either. It's probably sitting in a book someplace in a musty library, so to have a live performance of any sort whatsoever is probably a unique now in 1989, so why don't you give that a try again, see if you can remember some of the words.

The tune is supposed to be Marching Through Georgia.

Bring the good old milking stool, open wide the gate,

For the sun is setting and the time is growing late!

And Old Alfred always must be strictly up to date

So quickly call the cows home from pasture!

Goodbye! Goodbye! To the oxcart and the mule;

Hurrah! Hurrah! For farming now by rule.

So we sing the chorus at the Agricultural School

When Prexy calls the cows home from pasture.

[laughter]

Sue: There we go, we've got that for posterity, and if anyone at Alfred needs to hear those words, we've got them right here! ... we were talking about your mother being taken in by her grandmother...

Right after her mother died, she was taken in by her grandmother, and her father, I suppose, went back to work. He worked either in Oil City or Meadville, Pennsylvania, I think for the Pennsylvania Railroad, but I'm not positive. I've tried to... I studied Allegany County property records, and I've studied the roll of the Friendship Academy, when Friendship had their Sesquicentennial or whatever it was that they had, those books were available, and I went over to Belmont to the County, and I haven't found anything, and Gail Mitchell looked in the graveyards. The Dyers were from Black Creek or Belfast, that area in Allegany County, and we haven't found any grave nor any trace.

23:56

Sue: Were these folks all of English origin?

We don't know. Mama thought Dyer might be a German name, but we don't know, you see, Grandma Norton - they were from off there in that direction, and Grandpa and Grandma Norton didn't take pains to make the acquaintance of the family that married their daughter. I think, but I don't know, that Grandpa and Grandma Norton both had a long line of what they considered blue blood. I think I'm putting it correctly, I think, it's my impression, that they considered him inferior. Though I don't know, my mother never said so. But that's the impression that I got, that the Nortons, and Grandma Norton's maiden name was Parker, and her mother's maiden name was Fletcher. The Nortons and the Parkers and the Fletchers, we have their - lots of ancestors back to when they came from England.

Sue: This was through Massachusetts, was it Concord Massachusetts, that area?

Yes. I had my grandmother Fletcher, yes, Dolly Fletcher, and she married Elias Parker, and they were parents to my great-grandmother who lived with us, who I knew so well.

Sue; Tell us what the sampler said, Aunt Marjorie.

Yes, I had her sampler that she made before the Revolutionary War. And it had the numbers around the edge, little small numbers. It was on homespun flax, natural color, and it had the numbers around the edge, and the alphabet, a design - the border. And in the middle it said "Dolly Fletcher is my name, English is my nation, Wexford (that's Wexford, Massachusetts) is my dwelling place, in Christ is my salvation." So when my sister Mina, and her husband, and my husband and I are traveling in Massachusetts, we went from Boston up to Wexford, Massachusetts, we got to looking up the Fletchers and the Parkers, and we found lots of Fletchers and Parkers still in western Massachusetts.

Sue: Did they look like you?

Well, we didn't see very many of them. There was one that owned a grocery store. Well, we thought we'd go to the cemetery and see what we could find in the cemetery. We got there late in the afternoon, and had something to eat, and then started out. We stopped at a general store, I think it was... anyway, it was still open. We went in and asked him, his name was Fletcher or Parker, and we got to talking with him, and he referred us to the library. He didn't know much about the past history, but he said "There are records at the library that are available." But the library didn't open until 7 o'clock PM. So we had to wait a little while for the librarian to come and open the library, and then we went in. Boy, did we ever have a good time! Oh, the librarian was wonderful! She was a spinster, her name was Mae Day, and she had a doll collection she told us about. She brought us books and books of records about Parkers and Fletchers and the Battle of the Bridge out at Lexington.

29:19

Sue: Were they there?

Yes, a Judge Parker was the hero out at the Bridge.

MEC: I thought there was a fellow by the name of Robinson who was somehow related, and there was some sort of monument there in Wexford. Am I remembering that correctly?

Where did you hear that?

MEC: It seems like there was a Colonel Robinson that was also related to us, and fought in the Revolutionary War, and there was some sort of monument to him.

Did you read that in the genealogy?

MEC: I just remember that from that trip, because I was a child, and I was there with you.

Oh yes, you were with us.

MEC: And I recall that there was someone in that town named Quincy Stairs that had something to do with the library, because we had such a laugh over that funny name. And I recall that monument being there, Colonel Robinson.

Well, we just took notes as fast as we could take notes, and this and that you know, and then at 9 o'clock it was time to close the library. And we wondered if they'd be open the next day. "Why!", she said, "you may take these books." We had a room rented at the motel. "You may take these books to your room, and you bring them back to the store tomorrow morning, that'll be fine." We sat up till 2 o'clock or after, still taking notes on what was in those books. That's how we got a lot of material.

Sue: Where's that material now?

It's incorporated in the genealogy. And you have the notes your mother took.

Sue: And does my brother have some of that?

Yes, I sent it to him, I'm pretty sure.

MEC: Okay, I just want to get it straight, Aunt Marjorie. Our grandmother, Belle Dyer - what was her mother's name?

Ella.

MEC: Ella Norton?

Ella Norton.

MEC: Okay, and she married...?

Oscar Dyer.

MEC: Ella Norton married Oscar Dyer, the one who volunteered, and they had Belle Dyer, who was raised as Belle Norton, and married Ora Witter. Okay, so Ella Norton, who were Ella Norton's parents?

Mary Parker Norton and Nelson I Norton.

32:43

MEC: The Parkers and the Fletchers are on Belle Witter's side.

And the Nortons. The three high-class people.

MEC: If you wanted to belong to the Daughters of the American Revolution, that's the route we'd have to go through, I guess.

I know the Nortons, the Fletchers and the Parkers. I'm almost positive that all three of them have people in the American Revolution.

MEC: And probably in the Boston area, Paul Revere and stuff. Okay, tell me about the Dyers, is that spelled D Y E R? Okay, do you think there is any possibility they were dark skinned, dark haired, was there any American Indian in them, do you think?

I don't know. I've told you all that my mother knew. They did not encourage any investigation.

Sue: Didn't want to know!

MEC: I have a friend named Dyer, they spell it DAHIR, it's an Arabic thing.

Well, I questioned some Dyers, but I never got anywhere.

Sue: Nelson I Norton was the only ancestor we know of that was involved in politics. Is that so?

Well, near. There were, back different ones that were. But he was pretty much a politician.

Sue: What was his position?

Supervisor, Town Clerk, and Representative in Albany, and then he went once to Congress. He was appointed to fill a vacancy. It was when he was getting along in years, and was not well. It tells it in the county history - he refused to run for election on account of health.

Sue: And Supervisor, what town would he have been Supervisor of?

Hinsdale. And Representative of our district, whatever the number is, in Albany.

Sue: Was he an attorney, or no?

No. But he was a justice - he knew enough law that he was Justice of the Peace.

Sue: Was he also a farmer?

Not much. He had some land, but anything I ever heard I don't think he ever really farmed it.

Sue: Was he able to earn an income being a justice?

Don't ask me! ... Oh, well, I'll tell you. He had a store - he was a merchant! He owned a store in Hinsdale when they were married, and then they rented a house and lived in the rented house in Hinsdale when they were first married. We knew what house they lived in, and then he built this house up on the hill, and from running the store, I don't know how long he ran the store. As near as I know, he was not running it within Mama's memory. They were married in 1847, and Mama was born in 1870, so that was 23 years after they were married.

Sue: The hill that the house was on, was that where your house was, across the street and...

37:52

No, you don't remember about our house in Hinsdale, do you?

Sue: I know where your childhood home was - I took a photograph, it's next to the hotel. I was wondering, when you said that the Nortons lived up on the hill.

About a mile before Hinsdale a road turns off from Route 16 to the right, and that goes up through Hinsdale. So the house where my parents lived, and I was married, was next to the Methodist Parsonage. The Methodist Parsonage was sold for a hotel/bar. Diagonally across from that was where Miner and I, the first house that we owned.

Sue: So the Norton house was over in their direction...

Well, and then the hill goes up, right beyond the hotel, three houses beyond the hotel, you start going up the hill. And the house where Grandpa and Grandma Norton was about halfway up the hill, and then you come to a plateau, and that's where the business section and the school was and the fire hall and the Methodist church. And the road that goes across - from 16- this was the main road and went on to Cuba and to Ischua.

Sue: We remember that! We'd stay at Aunt Marian's and the trucks would roar through in the night, and all of a sudden they weren't roaring through anymore.

Yes, yes. Aunt Marian's house was about halfway up the hill. It was, I think, either the next house to Aunt Marian's or the second house from Aunt Marian's where my Grandpa and Grandma Norton lived when they were first married.

Sue: There was a family, was it the Lindermans?

41:25

No, it wasn't the Lindermans' house, it was an older house. The Linderman's house was a Queen Victoria, an 1880 or 1890 house. And the house where they lived was older, it had little shelves on the gable ends, little ledges come back where the roof came down, and that marked it as an early 19th century house.

44:04

Sue: We should say what this occasion is, and the date. This is July 2nd, 1989, and we're at the Eden Heights apartment complex where Aunt Marjorie Scott is now living. How long have you been living here?

Five months.

Sue: Prior to that she had an apartment in Olean. What was the address of your apartment in Olean?

125 and a half Fulton Street.

Sue: She didn't really want to leave that apartment... but she had to. She lives in a very light and cheerful apartment in this complex, and she has some of her familiar things here that we all enjoy looking at. A picture of Miner Scott looking very handsome over there on the wall in his wedding suit. And other treasures she's been pulling out of her dresser drawer, and giving us spools and handkerchiefs and different things from a long time ago as mementos. And also here is Mary Ellen Clever from Hendersonville, Tennessee and Diane

July 12, 1989 - Audiotape with Tim Robinson

Recorded by Tim Robinson, transcribed by Tim Robinson

Tim Robinson: Hello, it's the 12th of July, 1989. My name is Tim Robinson. I'm sitting with Marjorie Scott, who is my grandmother. I'm the son of Thelma. And she's about to embark on a little project that she's doing in cooperation with her niece, Sue Covello. Answering a lot of questions about life at the turn of the century and in the early days of her life, and different relatives that she had and knows about, and her recollections of those things.

This is Marjorie Scott. I was recently 95 years old and Sue and Mary Ellen Parsons Cleaver and Diane Anderson, my other two nieces, spent two days with me. My daughter Thelma had a party for me on the first of July. My birthday is the 16th of June, but it wasn't convenient to have it then. We waited until her son Tom came - he's in the Coast Guard and is being transferred to California.

Now the title that Sue wrote, asking me to do this project of eight tapes, and she wants a personal history, and the title she gave me some suggestions. And the title she suggested - A Personal History of Life in the 1900s in Hinsdale, NY by Marjorie Witter Scott. And I'm to proceed to tell about the school. And where I went to school was in Hinsdale NY. It was then the Hinsdale Union School. My first schooling was in my mother's kitchen in the house on Congress Street in Hinsdale, built by my grandfather, Nelson I Norton, built about 1850. There I learned my letters. My mother cut out the letters from heavy paper flour sacks. When she was teaching me to spell my name, she told me to lay down M, A, R, J... No! I said! J is Uncle Jay! I was quite insistent that it was not part of my name! But she prevailed, and I had to accept it! This is when I was four years old. My lessons continued at home after we moved to Hinsdale.

My mother was a qualified teacher, having graduated from high school and taught successfully for two years. When I was learning to read from Swinton's Primer, I came to the word BEN, there was a picture of a little boy and he had a red sled. And his name was Ben. But I hesitated over Ben. And my mother said "Well, if H... E... N... is hen, then what's B... E... N?" "Oh! Rooster!"

4:13

In September 1901, I entered 2nd Grade in Hinsdale Union School, which was conducted in a large two story building located where H M & PV Fire Hall now stands. On the first floor were three classrooms, each with its own cloakroom and a large hall from front to back. The rooms were Elementary Department (grades 1-4), Intermediate (grades 5-8), and High School. Each had its own large coal or wood-burning stove for heat. In the hall was a drinking fountain consisting of a ten-gallon stone crock on a pedestal with a faucet in the base. I'm not sure but I think that a tin cup hung nearby. I know that we did NOT have paper cups. Toilet facilities were outside. The upper floor of the building was a large hall which contained a laboratory for high school students, a large auditorium with a stage, wings, and so forth. It was also used as the town hall, entertainment center, and school gym.

There were three teachers - two women - four grades - and one man. All were Normal School graduates, all in their early twenties. Discipline in the grades was firm, but as far as I remember, never a ?? or use of corporal punishment. When I was in Primary, I was writing on my forehead one day. The teacher came back and asked what I was doing. "I'm writing my spelling words on my brain so I'll remember them!" She explained to me that I had been too literal in my interpretation of her thoughts.

We were given certain rules that we respected and obeyed. Our whole outlook was different than now. We had respect for authority and the property rights of others, especially adults. There was

??? -1:27:22

Most of the pupils lived in the village so went home for dinner. We had from 12 o'clock to 1 for the noon hour. Lunch was often brought in little tin pails. Some had lunch boxes. Nobody had Thermos bottles. Two pupils lived a little over than a mile away.

In 1916, the year I entered High School, a fourth teacher was added. A ?? who taught High School classes, thus increasing the number of subjects taught. We were offered 4 years of English and English Grammar, Zoology, Botany, Physiology, Physics, American History, Ancient History, Algebra, Geometry, Advanced Arithmetic, Business Arithmetic, Latin (2 years), ??(3 years), Basic Representation, according to demand. Credits were earned according to the number of recitations per week in each subject. From 2-5. When Matt Storey was principal, we had Gym. He was fresh from Normal School, very enthusiastic about the modern ideas in education. He taught us the Polka Steps, heel and toe, as an innovation, which brought disapproval from some parents. One boy refused to do it because it "was wicked!" But then, the Board of Education upheld Mr. Storey, but the boy was excused from dancing. A profession

of some sort of Christianity was expected as the norm for everyone in those days. Every morning, the first fifteen minutes was 'chapel'. The elementary students marched into the High School room to a march played on the organ. We then sang songs, had a scripture reading, and all repeated The Lord's Prayer. Nellie Green was very conscious of the evil effects of alcohol and tobacco, and her pupils had a reflection on that subject following chapel.

-1:24:41

My most vivid memory of playtime and school were of making leaf houses. A few of us brought rakes from home and drew floor plans of imaginary houses by raking the leaves into long, narrow lines. This was under the maple trees in the town square or park, in which both the church and school building were located. I even brought a small piece of carpet from home for my sitting room. We also played Pussy wants a Corner by the maple trees in the square. Where there was open space the older boys played baseball. At least one merchant, just for fun, during noon hour, would play with the high school boys.

I should also mention the sectional map of the United States, cut into pieces on the state lines. New York State along the county lines. They were fun and also educational, as were the ?? on Friday afternoons.

My chief playmate through the years would naturally have been my sister Marian, two years younger than I. Our personalities were so different that it just did not work out that way. When I was two years old, we had in our house what was called a what-not, a tier of shelves, with each one above smaller than the one below, that sat in a corner, with all sorts of curios and keepsakes, quite a temptation to a child. I was taught that I must NOT touch the things on the what-not! When I wanted to look at them, I would go and stand in front of it, put my hands behind me, and say "No-no! Mustn't touch!" When my sister became that age, she would run up to it, climb to the top, and grab whatever she wanted. Another difference - when my brother Lewis was a baby, my mother was changing him, and she said "Would one of you girls go and get me diapers?" So we both started, and I really intended to go and get them, but when I got out just outside the door, my sister came back with the diapers. Momma laughed, she said "Well, Marjorie, you started, but when you just got outside the door, Marian came back with the diapers." I thought about that, that I was different. She was quick, vivacious, always anxious for a good time. A sweet pretty blonde - rather delicate physically. I was husky, deliberate, conscientious, flat and rather loggy. All through life, because of these differences, we seemed to choose different friends.

14:30

Playmates

When I was four, a little boy by the name of Alfred Zimmerman lived up the road from us. He had a goat, a harness, and a little wagon in which he let me ride. In Hinsdale, we lived across the road from the Pierce family. Robbins was a year younger than I. We were almost constant playmates for two years, until we both started school. We were playing house one day. I was getting dinner - supposed to be- and he was sitting with a newspaper, upside down. I made

some remark to him, and he says "Keep still! Can't you see that I'm reading!" I was taken aback, but I thought "Well, maybe his father talks to his mother that way. I guess it's all right!" His sister May was three years older. Of course, she was in school, but she always took us into her plans when she was home. She was a born leader. She had musical and artistic talent which helped to broaden my appreciation of the finer things of life, which rubbed off on me. I remember a show that we put on. I was taught to do the cake-walk. She taught me to make valentines. She borrowed a pinking iron from one of the neighbors and made a scalloped edge all around, pasted on lace, made pictures of red hearts and fixed them all up fancy.

1:11:21

Play time or recreation was quite different when I was young than it is today. Most families had a few standard toys - a wagon or car, a sled, marbles, at least one ball, dolls and one or two games, ?? Or Old Maid or dominoes. Otherwise, we thought up things to do. We often played school, traveling by train or streetcar, house and so forth. Stage props and sound effects were improvised. In the summer, croquet was always popular.

My best friend until High School was Dorothea Lippert. She lived with her grandparents diagonally across the road, her mother, being a widow, was a traveling salesperson, as was my father. She usually came to our house right after school, and often helped me fill the woodbox, which I must do before playing. We often played Paper Dolls. We cut full length pictures of people from newspapers and magazines, especially fashion magazines - McCalls or Delineator. The pictures were mostly black and white. Colored pictures- one color plate in a fashion magazine was as much as we usually found. They were black and white, but we colored them to make colored outfits. At first we used pencils. Then Mrs. Lippert found that one could buy wax crayons, an assortment of twelve colors were saved in a sturdy box. They were called Crayola, the same as we have on the market today, only more in a box. Momma bought me a box also. How much fun we had producing beautiful outfits. American Beauty Rose was my favorite color. So many of my people had American Beauty costumes!

-1:14:00

19:14

In the summer of 1902 one of my playmates bragged about the arrival of a new brother or sister and explained to me about its delivery to their home. Their mother was in the bedroom off the sitting-room where the older children were playing. Doctor Litton came in with his little black bag. Sticking out of the bag she saw a little leg of a boy. The children were then hustled out into the kitchen and the door shut. This set me thinking about the fact that we had no baby.

20:48

My brother Lewis was four years old. One night my mother came to settle us into bed. I broached the subject and asked her to order a baby. She discussed the matter with me. My Aunt Ruby came and entered into the conversation. Momma would not promise. The more I argued the harder they laughed. Marian and I had been promised that some night we could go up and stay all night with a cousin who lived nearby. One night when we came home from

school, Momma was in bed and asked "Would you girls like to go up and stay all night with Nancy?" We ran to put our nighties into our little suitcase, or satchel we called it. I said to Nancy after we arrived "You know, I think Momma's going to get a baby. I asked her to." We stopped at home on our way to school next morning, and sure enough, there was a beautiful baby brother!

22:44

I rushed on to tell my teacher, relating some of the details from my viewpoint. She quickly hushed me up. I knew just how long it took to get a baby! Three weeks! How I loved that baby, who was Nelson! I immediately became a mother's helper, turning the crank on the washing machine, setting the diapers on the grass to bleach, and folding them when dry. As soon as he was three or four months old, I was allowed to rock him to sleep! I was left as a baby-sitter for an evening, under the supervision of Grandma Norton, while my mother and father went to a wedding reception. He slept soundly. So did I! But how proud and important I felt when my parents came home! I had done the job!

24:14

Two years later, on a Sunday afternoon in 1904, our parents and Nelson had gone for a drive. Marian and Lewis and I were left home, in charge of Grandma Norton. Told to rest on our beds. In Marian's and my room was a dressing table made from a dry-goods box, open front, one shelf, the outside draped with cheesecloth over pink chambray. The bottom compartment where we kept our underwear we had a mawkey? Tabby cat that had been on the bed with us, but was restless, so we put her down in that box on our underwear, pulled the drape shut, and went back to lie down. A few minutes later we heard a "Meoowwww!" and rushed over and saw a family of four or five kittens born. We had called Lewis so all three saw it. We were so excited! We called downstairs and told Grandma that Smooth had kittens! When Mamma came home, she met her at the door and told her in a shocked voice that we had seen the kittens born!

26:36

Leaders in thought and child training were just beginning to recommend teaching children the facts of life at an earlier age. Momma had already decided that it was time for Marian and me, so she took us aside and explained that babies came in the same way and that she was carrying another baby, which was Elizabeth. She also explained that it was a big secret with us, because not all mothers told their children about it. Elizabeth was not as good a baby as Nelson had been, but my idea of a beautiful child - blue eyes, blond curls. I willingly assumed more and more responsibility in caring for her, as well as learning to do all kinds of household chores, so when she was two, Momma took her and Nelson up to Buffalo to Aunt Nels to do Christmas shopping. Marian, Lewis and I of course were in school. Marian and Lewis and the house were left in my charge. We went across the road to sleep at a friend of Mamma's.

28:29

I well remember Saturday. We didn't have to do the Saturday work, we could do just what we wanted to. So we sat in the parlor, played the piano some, we sat in the parlor and just visited,

when it came time for lunch or dinner we went out. One I remember particularly... we got some uncooked macaroni, came in long sticks about a foot long. And we had some beet pickles. We used those macaroni sticks for straws and drank the beet pickle juice. That was something different! That was fun - to drink the beet pickle juice through the macaroni straws. We kind of made a mess around, because beet pickle juice stains! But that didn't matter. We thought, maybe we better kind of wash up the dishes and fix things up a little bit. As it came toward dark, of course in the wintertime, just before Christmas time, it got dark earlier, so we had to fill the lamps. We used kerosene oil lamps, and we had to fill them. When we went to light, it was out of oil. We went to get the oil can, but the oil can was empty. Lewis had to take the oil can up to the grocery store and get it filled. And then Will Caulkin, the delivery boy, delivered it down to the house. We had it out in the kitchen. We always ate in the dining room when Momma was home, but we'd just eaten out on the kitchen table. The kitchen table was all covered with dishes and macaroni straws and one thing and another, so we had to shove it all back and make a place for him to set the oil can so we could fill our lamps. Well that was my first day of keeping house! I didn't do so well, but we had fun, anyway! And we went across to Aunt ?? to sleep. And Mamma came home.

1:03:14

I didn't tell about making mincemeat. After Thanksgiving, it soon became cold. The weather it seems was more dependable then, and people butchered right after Thanksgiving. You could buy a quarter of beef and hang it up where it would freeze and stay frozen. You could hack pieces off from it as you wanted it and you'd have fresh meat for quite a while. Well, Mama was concerned that we might have a thaw, and something would have to be done with that meat. Before she left, she was concerned. 32:05 And sure enough, we had a thaw, and the meat was thawing. Well, I thought, "What would Mama do?" Well, I knew - she made mincemeat, when she had meat to take care of. That was what she usually did. Well, I got out the cookbook and found the recipe for mincemeat. Cut off the meat and ground it up in the meat chopper. It made 12 quarts. We put it in butter crocks, 5 lb. butter crocks. As I remember, six butter crocks. Then we put a plate over the top and stowed it up where it would be cold all the time. In the back part of the house - it wasn't exactly the pantry - the scullery, behind the kitchen toward the outside. When she came back, she was surprised, but she commended me - highly - for having saved the meat and made the mincemeat.

The next spring (after Leslie was born - her health was miserable all the time she was carrying him) she said to me that she did not know how she could have managed without my dependability. This helped me overcome the feeling of inferiority which I had earlier in my life.

I will now tell you about some of the especially good and happy times of my life and happy events of my childhood and other ??. My parents were always anxious to give us the best information and culture. When we were about 4, 6 and 8 it was decided that we should learn about talking on the telephone. There was only one telephone in Hinsdale at that time, which was at Mark Pierce's general store. He also had the post office. So one day we got word that we were wanted on the telephone. So the three of us went over, Marian, Lewis and I. Mr. Pierce had to call back - my father was calling from wherever he was. They had made the

arrangement beforehand. We stood with our backs against the wall, back in the back room. They got my father back on the line. I went first, and said "Hello" and then a little bit of talk with my father. Then Marian, then Lewis. So then WE had talked on the telephone! Not many of the children - my playmates - had ever talked on the telephone.

35:55

Besides that, I was taken to the Pan-American Exhibition in 1901. I distinctly remember the Indian village, the tents? the ?, the Electric Tower, the fireworks! Oh, I remember it so plain - sitting on the shore down by the waterfront, on the bank, and watching the most wonderful things up in the air. And there were pictures of men moving, and fighting, and the flag I remember, all in colors. Very very beautiful and wonderful to me!

When we were 8 and 10, Marian and I were 8 and 10, Mama sent us up to Aunt Nells in Buffalo one Friday afternoon on the train. Papa met us at the station and took us to Aunt Nells. We had supper, and then after supper we took a streetcar downtown to see the electric lights, which was quite a sight! We'd never seen electric street lights before. Olean still had gas lights. Then on Saturday, we went to Niagara Falls. We had dinner at a hotel, and could order whatever we wanted to! It was our first introduction to eating at a place like that. Oh, I remember about the desert. There were three things that my sister Marian wanted: watermelon, apple pie and ice cream. But she couldn't decide. So finally Papa said to the waitress "Well, you can bring her a small portion of each one!". Well, that was what the waitress did. Marian had her desert that she wanted, a small portion of each one.

-56

And then we went on what was called the Gorge Route, which was famous at the time and still is mentioned in the Niagara Falls Gazette as a relic of the past. It was electric car street cars, and it stopped at six or eight different points of interest around the Falls. We got off, probably, at each stop. I remember getting off at the foot of the Falls, where the Maid of the Mist came up, and then we went on to Goat Island, and we went up as far as Brock's Monument in Canada. And I was very much impressed about that, because it was a foreign country, and I'd never been in a foreign country!

And then Brock was a general in the French and Indian War, and they were fighting against the American colonies, and I had a different feeling about that - I didn't know if I should feel very friendly toward him or not.

And I remember eating fruit that Papa brought, fresh fruit. I remember eating peaches on the streetcar as we rolled along, which was kind of a messy job.

40:40

By the time I was twelve, my viewpoint was changing, quite rapidly. We had moved. My grandma Witter wanted to take over the house where we lived, and my parents had bought a house down the street farther, down at the foot of the hill. We moved down there. That was different playmates. I was confident in what I could do on account of my mother's commending

me, and that I COULD do different things. Also my scholastic abilities. But I realized that I had a place in the world to fill. I had developed a personality of my own. My sense of romance lent a glow to many of my experiences! Down below the houses in the deserted Canal bottom was a large patch of weeds, six feet or more tall. I don't know what they were, but we thought that they might be, oh, artichokes. Anyway, they seemed like a forest, and my friends and I imagined that that was the Sherwood Forest, and we played that we were Robin Hood and his gang. Marian and I would hustle through the dinner dishes to get down there.

And one day we were playing croquet, and one of the boys had a bag of chocolates that he was passing around. And my first?, George Maxwell, that was given by the Sunday School teacher, who was Nellie Green, my former grade teacher, and she had a class of boys.

42:31

I belonged to a class of girls, about the same age. And so she wanted to give this party, and she called the boys together and told them that she was going to give a party, and each one of them could ask a girl from the other class, whoever they wanted to, to come to the party. Well, of course, that was a ???. He peddled papers, he sold the Buffalo Evening News, and he always stopped a little bit at our house, to visit a little, or maybe to work on our school work - he was in the same grade with me. Well, Momma didn't know, I was only 12 years old. She thought 12 was pretty young to go out in the evening, with the boys, but she said "We'll ask Papa, and see what Papa says." So, when Papa came home, we asked him. He said yes, that I could go. So I did. And we played a kissing game, which my mother did not approve of. I didn't know it then, but once I got home and told her, she said "No, that was wrong." Kissing games were bad, and not to play them. The refreshments were cocoa to drink, and chocolate cake. That raised a question for me. It had been an accepted fact, for five years, that "Marjorie does not like chocolate." I realized then that I was growing up, and better learn to like chocolate, which I did!

In the fall of 1908, what a beautiful world! I had a new plaid gingham jumper dress new to start school. In school, there were many new students from outside the district, including Edward Kent. He came from down on the back road toward Olean, drove a horse to school and kept it in the barn nearly across the road from our house. Elodine and I both liked him. He was in school, and Elodine and I had become friends by then, because Dorothea lived uptown and (now) we had other friends. Elodine lived nearby, and we were best friends by then. We sort of both liked Edward and kind of shared him. We'd walk over to the post office at the noon hour, and then he had to walk down to feed his horse in the house across the road from our house, and eat his dinner down there. So he walked along with both of us. Later, I kind of wanted extra special attention, naturally, and I would watch out the window for when he drove up, and there was just time enough for him to get his horse taken care of and then I'd step out our door, and I'd walk up the street with him. That worked sometimes.

Then came the Halloween Hunt. Well, I wanted to ask him. I'll tell a little bit about the Halloween hunt. It had been established for years. Some church organization would put on a dinner Halloween night. The women were to hide - a whole group of women were to hide four or five or six together, and each woman was to ask a man, not her husband, to hunt her. And the girls took part too, all 12 years old or so, on up to women 45 and 50. A great time - the

Halloween Hunt. And they hid anywhere in the village of Hinsdale - they had certain limits established. The Erie Railroad, the creek on the other side, and the last house, the Gant house, and Goodrich's house were the limits. They had to be hid within the village. So then the bell rang at 7 o'clock. The men were to be gathered and start out hunting the certain group of women. If they found the women, then the women had to pay for the supper. If they didn't, then the men had to pay for the supper. So they were found or not found. At 8 o'clock the church bell rang. So they went to supper after the bell rang at 8 o'clock. Everyone came out of hiding. They tried to sneak out so nobody would know where they hid. There were certain hiding places in town that the men didn't know about and that the owners of the house kept secret. That was an establishment that lasted for years and years! We still hid for many years, up until about 1940.

Of course, as the Halloween Hunt was coming up, I wanted to ask Edward to hunt me. But I didn't quite have the courage. I was afraid that if I asked him, that maybe he'd rather hunt Elodine, that maybe he'd refuse, and I would feel so bad if he refused on me, that I couldn't face it. So instead I asked Leo Raub, who was a good boy, member of the Sunday school class, nothing wrong with him at all, only I just didn't care anything about him. They called him Reuben. That sort of tells how the other pupils felt about him. He came from up on Dutch Hill, he was a little bit different. So I asked him, and he hunted me. So, we were allowed to go in the library to study, when we wanted to during school hours, when we didn't have classes. I was in the library one day, before the Hunt, and Robbins Pierce was in there, and we were visiting of course, instead of studying, which was often the case, and he said "Who's going to hunt you, Halloween?" And I said "Leo Raub" and he said "Oh, you know, I was talking to Edward Kent the other day. He said Elodine had asked him, but Gee, he wished it had been Marjorie that asked him! Well, of course, I was very much disappointed, but that was the way it was, so Edward hunted Elodine, and Leo Raub hunted me. Well the next time that we had our Literary Society on Friday evening - the high school pupils went to that (51:44) - Leo asked to walk home with me. I was staying out at Grandma Witter's at the time because Papa had the scarlet fever. That's one of the bad times that I'll tell about later. So it wasn't very far to walk, so we walked down to Grandma's house, stopped in front of the house on the sidewalk. I was ready to say goodnight, very coolly. He says, "I don't suppose you'd mind if I do this right along all the time." I says "No, I don't care." and bolted in the door. Well, I don't know if he did walk home with me one other time. But I didn't like it at all. He sat two seats behind me and across the aisle, and I'd feel his eyes staring at me, and I'd look around and he was staring at me. And I didn't like it at all - I just resented it. So I got Ann Kent, a cousin of Edward's, was staying all night with me for Literary Society, the next time we had it, so I said to her "I don't want Leo Raub to go home with me, I want to get away from him, so we'll just wait and watch. So we stood down in the hall and some pupils were leaving, and some were still... and we stood there, at the top of the stairs, just waiting, and Leo stood at the foot of the stairs, by the outside door, waiting for us to come along down the steps.

(54:14)

And Roscoe Gile, down in the basement, said "Hi Rueben, come down here a minute!". So Rueben looked up at us and went down the stairs. So we went down the stairs and ran as fast

as we could rundown across the square towards home. So that was - he hated me after that. He just let it be known that I was just dirt! Well, that's my experience with him.

55:00

Of course, I still loved Edward, and Elodine and I still shared him, in our diaries, and in walking back and forth, to and from school. It was that same fall, I was in Secondary German class, and we read (this is how romantic I was) Höher als die Kirche (Higher than the church), a little book written in German, a romance of a couple about some statue that had to be put in the church but be higher than the church. I don't remember the plot, but anyway it was a romantic story and oh, I just enjoyed that so much - every minute of it. I enjoyed translating it... Well, during the summer vacation it all cooled off. Then, in the fall of 1909, Dean Campbell, another new boy, had moved up on the Lucas farm - his father had- from Olean. And HE came to school. Well, I was very much interested in him. He was a challenge to me in the different classes. He could beat me, in many things, in Math and other things. That challenged me. And we were both on the debating team that had debates during sessions of the literary club. We were captains on the opposite sides of this debate, so we had to confer and decide on our rules and so forth, and we got really pretty well acquainted. After the debate - we debated hotly - I don't know which one was judged the winner. It was close, anyway. And he walked home with me.

Well, it was still warm weather. A friend of mine, Ross Johnson at Cuba Lake, got up a house party. His people owned a cottage at Cuba Lake, and he could have the use of it. So he invited, by couples. His girlfriend was Mildred Johnson, and he invited Dean and me, and Roscoe Gile and Drew Farrell,, Helen Carn and Walter Willover. I don't remember the others, if there was another couple. And then the principal and the preceptress, Mr. Sprague and Miss Johnson that were the chaperones. It was over the weekend. We went up on Saturday morning and stayed until Sunday towards night.

(-36.06)

We went up on Saturday in the morning. We went on the train, Train 2, Saturday morning, and we walked up to the lake and settled ourselves to have a good time. In the afternoon, we went for a walk up on the hill. And to show what a fluke I was, they were talking about different things, and interested in what we saw, and there were little snakes, I guess they call them garter snakes, about 6 or 8 inches long. Flat and crawling around. Some of the girls began to squeal. I picked up a snake, and Ross Johnson anyway of the boys took off, and I took after him with the snake, which was sort of a ridiculous thing, but anyway, I did. Well, that showed more what kind of a person I was. To dare somebody, because he was afraid and I chased him. And then after supper, we needed to get milk, and we were to row across the lake to a farm, across the lake, and someone was to row across after the milk. Well, Dean offered to row, and to take me. Oh, that was just one of the most romantic events of my young life. The lake was just like glass, and I was soo happy and thrilled, and we went leisurely across and got the milk and came back. When it came time to go to bed, the girls were all to sleep upstairs and the boys downstairs. Of course, there was yelling back and forth and one thing and another. Then the boys put pepper on the stove, and the cottage was very loosely built. An odor from downstairs could come right up. The edge of the floor did not go between the studs, so the pepper came right upstairs and

pretty near choked us. We squealed and run around for a time but we were undressed and so we couldn't go downstairs and do anything about it. After a while the teacher got everything settled down, and everybody was in bed and quiet. I got up and went downstairs and got a dipper of water and sneaked back partway to the upstairs and doused the water where Roscoe Gile was sleeping and then ran on up the stairs. So I was getting even with them for putting pepper on the stove.

-32:50

Sunday was a peaceful, happy, romantically happy. We walked back down to Cuba, took Train 1 I guess it was, back to Hinsdale. On Monday we went back to school. And I must tell you that at this time, Dorothea again entered the picture of my life. She had spent the year before in school in Buffalo, under her mother's supervision, ideas and ideals. The ideal was to marry money. A girl could get ANY man if she knew how to manage it. That was to make him do things for you. Dorothea wanted Dean. I adhered to my mother's strict ideals of being very modest and withdrawn. I was not allowed to keep company or receive any special male attention until I was 19. Dean treated Dorothea and me equally in school, but studied with her evenings, and spent Sunday afternoon and evening with her through the winter. He finished school in January, got all his counts, and went to Ames, Iowa to agricultural college. He wrote to me at the time my Uncle Jay died. He heard of it and wrote me a nice letter. At that time, we were debating about class rings- Dorothea and Dean, and George Maxwell and I were the four graduates that year, so we had to decide about class rings, and we were waiting to hear from him before deciding on our class rings. Well, Dorothea didn't hear from him and didn't hear from him, but I'd had a letter! So I felt sort of proud about that. Dean came home for graduation and vacation, then went to Cornell in the fall. He and Dorothea and I continued to be very good friends. At this time, Miner started serious courtship, so I did not see either Elodine nor Dorothea often. I continued to correspond with Dorothea or Dean for years, and the special glow that I felt in his presence lasted for years. All four of us realized that and accepted it. I was 17 when I graduated from high school. Everyone expected me to be a teacher. I did not wish to be an 'old maid' school teacher. I wanted to marry a farmer. Miner, four years older, knew what he wanted. He wanted to marry me. He made friends with my mother who had made the rule about being 18. She relented a bit, but restricted his visits, so the summer passed. I was not madly in love, but he was pleasant, agreeable - he was a GOOD boy, no bad habits. He didn't smoke nor drink, had respect for religion, was quite inclined toward religion. There was nothing wrong with him at all, and I liked him - I enjoyed being with him. So, before we went to Alfred, I had promised to marry him, and accepted an opal engagement ring. He had decided to go to Alfred too, to be a farmer, because that was what I wanted - to be a farmer.

It is now August 23rd. I have applied myself diligently to the task of running a tape recorder and produce acceptable tapes. I am not yet satisfied, but have been improving. I have been six weeks doing one side and started on the other side. In looking over Sue's suggestions in regard to schooling, I find I've skipped vacations and books. I will now tell you about them.

(-27:39)

In summer, we had ten weeks vacation. Christmas- ten days to two weeks. Easter - usually ten days. We did not have snow days of course, because none of the pupils were transported by public transportation. Examination week in January and in June, we didn't have regular school just those in high school took examinations when the grades also had examinations, so it was not regular school for that week. We had quarterly examinations every quarter, that would be last of October, first of November, I don't remember exactly when. We didn't have classes as regularly. And about books- I remember the Milne Arithmetic and Milne Algebra, Faye's Geography, Loveland's Reader?? Poems from Whittier, Longfellow, Eggleston's History, Ivanhoe, Irving's Sketchbook, Merchant of Venice, Julius Caesar, MacBeth, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. I learned quotations from the poems all through the grades. One that I've always remembered and has given me great happiness has been from Paradise Lost -

“And missing thee, I walk unseen
On a dry, smooth-shaven green,
To behold a wandering moon,
Wandering, near her highest noon.
Like one who has been led astray
Through the heavens' broad pathless way.

I've watched the moon out the bedroom window many, many a night, with a cloud floating around it, under it and out again, 'like one who has been led astray'. That quotation has given me pleasure all my life! Also, I've enjoyed many, many parts that I learned from Whittier's and Longfellow's poems.

And scenes from Ivanhoe stay with me, and the Sketchbook, Merchant of Venice, let's see,

“All that glitters is not gold,
Often have you heard that told.
Had you been as wise as old,
You your life would not have sold.

That was said to one of the young men, because when he was told to choose a casket, he chose the gold casket.

At Christmas, Ichabod Crane and English Christmas from Irving's Sketchbook... I remember both very distinctly. I think it's a shame that children nowadays don't have that literary background and appreciation that we were given back in those days.

Sue also mentions about the creek. I have already told you about fishing in the little brook up at Grandpa Witter's. We also waded in it and on hot days put on old dresses and tried to get wet all over in some little pond. When I was 10, the Oil Creek froze over, solid, and I was allowed to

go skating there. But I had double runner skates instead of single runner, which I hadn't learned how to skate on single runner skates yet. When I was older, past 12 years old, I was trusted to take Marian and Lewis to the Olean Creek behind our house. I tied two ten-gallon syrup cans together for water wings and tried to float, or propel myself a short distance along the shallow part. I was ALWAYS very conscious of my responsibilities. So although I loved the water, I could not relax and truly enjoy it.

I will now return to Good Times and Bad Times

When Papa had the scarlet fever was one of the bad times. He was taken sick in Ellicottville where he was working - got up one morning with a sore throat and fever, feeling miserable. So he called the doctor, and the doctor diagnosed it as scarlet fever. Well, scarlet fever had to be quarantined, right where they found it! Well, the doctor couldn't quarantine the hotel, and he didn't want to take him to his office, and quarantine his office of course, so what to do?! Well he didn't know. He decided, the best thing to do was to send Papa home on the train, railroad car, and HOPE he didn't expose too many other people. So, Mama was notified, and we three children who were in school were sent up to Grandma Witter's and Papa came home. And they were quarantined for six weeks. This would have been in November that he came home, probably early in November, because Christmas was coming before too long. Of course, in those days, there wasn't any social security or unemployment insurance nor anything else. If the man of the house wasn't working, they didn't have any income! So that made it bad, a hard time. But Grandma took care of us.

Papa was not REALLY ill. He learned with a poker - he'd heat a poker in the coal stove - heat a stove poker red hot, and slabs/panels of wood, he learned to do burnt wood, which was a fad at the time. He did several pieces of burnt wood, and Mama crocheted, and made Christmas presents for the children. I remember a hammock she crocheted for Elizabeth, Elizabeth's doll. So that was the thing - we were up at Grandma's and they were down there, kinda having an entirely different kind of a life. Leisurely, and day after day. When it came Christmas, of course, not being any money, the question was, we just didn't expect any Christmas presents - there was not money to buy them, and Mama hadn't been able to go shopping. So we were just... they had something for the younger children. I was looking at the younger children and trying to satisfy them, of course, and Mama said to me "We'll all hang up our stockings!" That was a family custom. Everyone hang up his stockings! I didn't expect anything in mine, and it didn't look as if there were anything in it. So I was still satisfied. So Mama said "Look in your stocking!" So I did, and down in the toe I found a sterling silver thimble. Well, I'll tell you, that, as they say nowadays, that made the day for me! I worked hard, and satisfied myself, but I got a silver thimble which was a - sterling silver, you know, that was something! Mama had gotten it with her Larkin order.

In those days, they had the [Larkin Soap Company](#), and you'd send a \$10 order and you got premiums, and sometimes side premiums, different things. And she'd gotten that a while back, and saved it for Christmas. So that was REALLY a worthwhile - it was hard, in one way, but it was a very worthwhile experience for us because we older children adjusted to Grandma's ways and learned to do as Grandma did and Grandma told us to. And at least I, and I'm sure Marian

and Lewis to some degree, learned to think about other people, and deny themselves. So it was really worthwhile.

The really BAD time, as a family, was in the fall of 1910 - through the winter, and into the summer of 1911. That was the year that I graduated in June. But the time of the trouble overshadowed my graduation. In the fall the family was growing, growing bigger, older, needing more bedroom space, so my parents decided to remodel the house. And the plans included moving the stairway and building a chimney from the ground up - a complete chimney - and putting in a bathroom - modern plumbing. Well, there was a family of seven of us. I THINK that Grandma Norton went down to Uncle Jim's, in Salamanca, for a while, because her bedroom was made into the bathroom. [Note: The 1910 census showed MARY Norton living at James Norton's home.] Well, anyway, the plans proceeded, but they had to hurry because cold weather was coming on, a sewage system had to be installed, and by building the chimney, there would be openings to the outdoors, and so the work proceeded. We had the place where the foot of the stairway was where they were placing the chimney. And that was practically in the middle of the living quarters of the house.

The dining room and the kitchen were on the back. So we had the dining room and kitchen pretty much to ourselves. But otherwise, there were workmen in that part of the house, and tools, and materials, lath and plaster and soft mortar. Well, just a mess, all the time, so it was pretty upset living. The chimney, bathroom, and back part were fairly well along, so that things could calm down a little before Christmas. I think that Grandma Norton came home about then, because I know she was there the latter part of the winter. So things weren't so bad, and then they decided to put in acetylene lights. We'd had just oil lamps before, and the Crosby's were building their stone home, they called it. Their house had burned, and they were getting acetylene lights, and they sent the demonstrator over to Papa, that maybe WE'd have acetylene lights, and Papa decided, Mama and Papa decided that we'd have them too. And that meant that the whole house had to be, well, would you say plumbed? It came through pipes, of course. Acetylene gas was made in a big tank in the cellar, which mix carbide and water together, which produced a gas. The gas was piped to the different places in the house where they wanted fixtures. Each room, each main room, was to have a chandelier in the center of the ceiling, which meant that the pipes had to go up inside the walls, and that there had to be a hole cut in the floor up above to locate the chandelier in the room below. So there were holes in the floor different places. The workers were working at that, and also Billy Beacon was painting - he was interior decorator - and he was painting and papering inside. He worked on his own terms. He came when he got ready, and if he didn't want to work on a certain day, he didn't come. But his paint, his brushes were all sitting around wherever he was working. And we were still living in more or less commotion.

Then we received, in the latter part of January, that Uncle John, my father's sister Myrtle's husband, had died. So Papa decided to go down, to be with Aunt Myrtle for the funeral and help her what he could.

1:22:24

While Uncle Jay, my father's brother, had just had an opening, the corner store, he was going to run the corner grocery store, and had had his opening on Saturday, just at the time that Uncle John died. So he went with Papa, down to Aunt Myrtle's, down near New York City, and were gone for a week or so. Well, by the time they came home, Uncle Jay was sick on the train coming home, and was taken right to the house, and called the doctor, Doctor Jury it was, and (the doctor) said he had diphtheria. Well, that was very serious, and that had to be quarantined, and they .. Since Grandpa Witter's death, Grandma and Aunt Ruby, and Uncle Jay and Aunt Gertie and their three children had lived in the other half. Well, Uncle Jay was taken to their half of the house, but the whole house had to be quarantined, so Grandma and Aunt Ruby and Aunt Gertie were all sent down to our house! And Papa and Aunt Ruby stayed to take care of Uncle Jay, and they also had a nurse, a Registered Nurse. He was sick only a few days, and died. And was buried, well, early in the morning, as I remember, in the Maplehurst Cemetery, because diphtheria was VERY contagious, and everybody was afraid that they'd get the germs! Papa and Aunt Ruby had to remain in quarantine until they could get negative cultures, which was for two or three weeks! And the fourteen of us, with Aunt Gertie and the children, and Grandma Witter, and our family, there were fourteen at our house. We had to be semi-quarantined until they could get negative cultures from us, but our cultures came back clear right away, so we were let out. And after Papa and Aunt Ruby, they were two or three weeks, anyway, quarantined before they got negative cultures. And when they came down to our house, Aunt Gertie went home to her people. But we still had more than a houseful.

1:26:40

I intended to tell a humorous incident, while Aunt Gertie and her children were still at our house. Aunt Gertie slept on the davenport in the parlor, and above that was the big bedroom - master bedroom. Where Marian and I were sleeping, and one night we went to bed and I blew out the light, started across the floor to the bed, and stepped in the hole. There were boards over it, but they tilted when I stepped on them, and my foot went RIGHT down, and knocked the plaster and lath off the ceiling of the parlor down onto Aunt Gertie. So just all of a sudden, there she lay in bed trying to go to sleep, and all of a sudden a whole bundle of lath and plaster came down on top of her! Well, that was the humorous side.

Back in the 1800s, and 1700s, diphtheria was a serious plague - many had died from it. And at this time, they were only beginning to control it with antibiotics, with a toxin antitoxin. People still had that dread, terrible dread of it from former times. So it made it hard for our family - many people in the village, the whole village was very much upset! To have had a case of diphtheria in town! And it made it hard for us - they were almost afraid to get near any of us. Papa was appointed executor for Uncle Jay's estate, or administrator, and he tried to open the store. And I went to tend store, but very few people dared to come in. They felt that there were germs there, that he'd gotten the germs in cleaning out the mess that was in the store when he took it over. It made a great impression on the community and affected us - they didn't seem to want to get near us for quite a while, for fear we might have some germs on us.

Aunt Ruby then became part of our family. Grandma's house was rented. Grandma was an invalid, having suffered a stroke previously. Grandma needed Aunt Ruby to care for her. Her

mind had become quite confused by the death of Uncle John and Uncle Jay and all the confusion therewith. In May, Grandma Norton had a stroke, at 91. We then added a nurse, who came in days to care for the two grandmas. This lasted two or three weeks. Grandma Norton died right close to my graduation, which was June 19th, 1911. The day of her funeral, Miner made his first call, driving his bicycle down from Friendship school picnic at Cuba Lake. Soon after that, Aunt Myrtle and her two children decided to come up from Rockland County and spend the summer with her mother. Of course, that meant our house. That meant 14 of us. With Miner on weekends as often as he was allowed.

I have now come to the general heading of Home.

I have already told some about our responsibilities and discipline. Each child, as soon as able, was given certain chores, the older ones watching out for the younger ones at all times, working as a family. Each child required a different method of discipline. Momma would say to me "Good little girls don't do that!" My aim was to be a good little girl. This basic motivation lasted until after my mother's death when I was 24 years old. Marian, with her charming ways, usually did pretty much as she wished. She helped me with the dishes, bed-making and so forth. Lewis was given heavy responsibilities early - the lawn, the care and milking of the cow. He was to be obedient and dependable. I think Nelson was the family favorite, I'm sure he was. He never seemed to need much discipline. Elizabeth was very sensitive. She would make a square mouth, everybody was sorry for her. Then she would pucker up and cry at the least provocation. Leslie was the worst problem of all. He would run away. Finally, Momma tied him, with a rope, to the tree outside the kitchen door. He would sit down at the end of the rope, as near the house as he could get, and SCREAM until she would come and bring him in or let him loose. She didn't let him loose outdoors, or away he'd go! Mina just grew, I guess, like Topsy in Uncle Tom's Cabin. Papa's discipline was more apt to be corporal punishment. But often, he prayed and then apologized after punishing one of the children. Mama reasoned with us, fitted the punishment to the fault. If one did another like oneself. She little used rewards, neither one of them used reward, or hiring. We were expected to do right. My father did not End of tape

1989 - Audiotape #4

Recorded by Marjorie Scott, transcribed by Tim Robinson

On the first three tapes, I have pretty well covered the main events of my life. Sue's outline now asks me to turn to a more historical viewpoint, all in Hinsdale NY and my personal experience. I will first take higher education, it's availability, career, choices for men and for women, and then local perceptions of bigotry, s?s, alcoholism and folklore. At the turn of the century, an eighth-grade education was available. Hinsdale and Maplehurst and all larger school districts had high school subjects. Fredonia Normal was nearby, expenses were nominal and it offered many opportunities to earn your board and room. The same applied to Alfred University which

offered a Bachelor of Arts degree. Both of these were for teaching or as a foundation for other professional training. Many of the smaller colleges were coeducational. Larger colleges and Universities were more likely to be for men or women only. There were also denominational schools for educating priests, pastors and church leaders. St. Bonaventure and Colgate Rochester started early. During the middle years of the century, many evangelical fundamentalist groups started their own schools. Oral Roberts is one.

(1:50)

In 1920 the idea of centralization began to be agitated by the state Department of Education. We first heard of it through the Grange. I was appointed delegate to a meeting in Buffalo where the idea was presented and explained. The Grange furthered the idea and worked with our District Superintendent Herbert Fairwell to promote it. Howard Crosby, who was by then Hinsdale's chief employer, president of the School Board, and also one of our largest taxpayers joined the fight - and it could be called a fight. Many, for various reasons, said it just couldn't be done. And the taxes!! Ohh!! About 1930, Hinsdale School District #2 voted to centralize, build a schoolhouse, buy buses, hire more teachers and otherwise conform to what was required of them by the Department of Education. This getting in on the ground floor was a great value to Hinsdale. Starting with a nucleus of rural districts and gradually drawing others from Olean, Portville, Cuba, Ischua. The greatest amount of credit, I'm sure, should go to Howard Crosby. He worked untiringly for the good of the community.

(3:26)

Educational opportunity increased rapidly all through the 1900s. Agricultural schools were established. Later came BOCES and other plans whereby one could learn a trade or other skills. The cost of education has quadrupled in recent years, but early in the century almost any person with intelligence and determination could obtain a chosen goal. When I was young, the most popular career for women was marriage, motherhood and homemaking. Any other employment was hopefully temporary. A woman could also be a secretary, telephone operator, nurse, housekeeper, salesperson or just a hired girl - a household worker. Some were born schoolteachers - my grandmother Norton was perhaps one of these. She taught, very successfully, for sixteen terms and was engaged for seven years to be married to my grandfather, N.I. Norton.

By mutual consent, their marriage was delayed until he was thoroughly established in the business world - a general store in Hinsdale, NY. After marriage she continued to be most interested in books. She was no housekeeper, nor, from what I hear, a mother either. My grandfather built a second upright on their upright-and-wing home for his personal use as supervisor, justice of the peace and other political business. Gifted women chose careers according to their ability in the entertainment world, art, literature and music. The opportunities for them have steadily increased. This is true also for colored people, both men and women. For men, early career choices were farming, especially for sons of prosperous landowners. Business, merchants and professional lives - lawyers, engineers, army, other service

(6:09)

The labor and career situation has constantly changed, like everything else through the century. World War I opened the doors of labor for women, and increased education made everyone more competent. Now, previously unheard of things are happening. The electronic age has so changed all our concepts. Our children in schools learn by computers, and practically all business is carried on by computers. It is already beyond me to discuss present job opportunities - there is less call for labor, more call for know-how and understanding. The fact that I'm able to record onto tapes still sort of boggles my mind, although it has been a worthwhile experience. I may have proven that you CAN teach an old dog new tricks!

It is really beyond me to discuss present job opportunities. I have grandsons working with all sorts of electronic equipment in America, Saudi Arabia, Asia, Brazil, Tom in the Coast Guard, if it could be called a career some with Wycliffe in Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Philippines,

(At this point, Marjorie's recording concludes. Sue Covello added the following comment afterwards)

Sue Covello:

This is the end of the tape we have called Grandma Scott Talks, or, Life in the 1900s by Marjorie Witter Scott. All of the material on these tapes was prepared by Aunt Marjorie from February 1988 through the fall of 1990 while she was in her mid-nineties. She died on Wednesday November 28, 1990 in Olean, NY. I'll read part of her obituary which I believe comes from the Olean paper.

Mrs. Marjorie Scott, formerly of the Gile Hollow Road, Hinsdale, died November 28, 1990 at the Cattaraugus County Nursing Home in Olean. Born June 16th, 1894 in Hinsdale, she was the daughter of Ora and Belle Norton Witter. In 1912 in Hinsdale, she married Miner J. Scott, who died in January 1978. Mrs. Scott was a graduate of Hinsdale Union High School class of 1911 and NYSA at Alfred in 1913. She was a lifelong resident of the vicinity and was a member of the Hinsdale United Methodist Church and also the First Baptist Church of Olean for over 50 years in its Burden Bearers Class. Mrs Scott was employed for over 40 years as a substitute rural letter carrier on her husband's route out of Hinsdale, and was active in the Auxiliary of the National Rural Letter Carriers, serving in various offices including New York State President. Surviving are three sons: Howard M. Scott of Lewiston, David W. Scott of Hinsdale, and Richard N. Scott of Lakeland, Florida, a daughter, Mrs. Ralph (Thelma) Robinson of Olean, 19 grandchildren, several great-grandchildren and several great-great-grandchildren, as well as several nieces and nephews. She was pre-deceased by three brothers and three sisters.

I understand Aunt Marjorie had recently written additional material to continue the tapes. If that is true, I will read that material onto the master tape as soon as I can. We will also try to preserve the notes she made for the taping. Aunt Marjorie was buried in Hinsdale Cemetery, Maplehurst NY on December 1, 1990, not far from her mother and father, whom she loved very much.

This is Susan Witter Covello, daughter of her brother Nelson Witter. Today is Thursday, December 6, 1990.

Bob Anderson transcript June 6, 2020

Transcript of Steve Covello's conversation with Bob Anderson, June 6, 2020

Bob: [Elizabeth Witter, Bob's mother] was still home and had a good view of this situation. I started to write you a letter and I'm going to just read it because it's a couple of two or three pages in handwriting but it organizes the situation pretty well. Let me just read it to you and then we can talk about it, OK?

I'm going to keep this relatively short and limited for now to the question you asked me as to whether I ever heard anything about Nellie to lead me to believe that she had Native American background. The answer is a resounding yes. In fact, no one among the Ora Witter family with whom that subject came up, principally my mother Elizabeth, ever referred to Nellie in any other context other than she being a local Cattaraugus County Native American from down in the Salamanca area.

The lore I grew up with is that Nellie came into the Witter household under a system which was common in those days at an early age probably around seven or eight years old. In those days, there was, and still is, a substantial population of Native Americans in Cattaraugus and nearby counties of New York. That population produced a substantial number of "orphans" – read that, actually, as illegitimate children who required care, and the county was responsible for. A system was developed for housing these children and the County orphanage. But it also allowed those children to be, what was called, bound out to private families who agreed to maintain those children in return for the services of the child as a household helper.

Nellie, by every report I ever heard, mainly from my mother Elizabeth, but from others of the Witter household, both the men and the women, was such a bound out child under the auspices of Cattaraugus County. This system, by its nature, and especially because of the large Native American population in Western New York, created many such bound out Native American children. And by all accounts that I ever heard, Nellie was one of them and was plainly a full-blood Native American.

Steve: You say "full-blood" which would suggest that Nellie's parentage would have been both a mother and father of Native American background, is that correct?

Bob: And that appears to be the case. "Father unknown, mother had to give up the child" which I have no knowledge about. I have no indication who that might have been. That would have all been taken care of by the County people.

Steve: Except I know who her mother is. Her mother is a woman named Mary Catherine Voakes. She had several other children. When her father died, she married her husband's nephew and had another child named Edward Grant Stocking. And according to his grandson,

he had Native American heritage too. If this is the case, Nellie would be half or quarter Native American.

(8:30)

Bob: Fascinating, but absolutely unknown to me. I'm trying to keep my piece of the story to the lore I was taught and heard, and you don't need to convince me there's an alternative because there almost always seems to be an alternative story, which is not the purpose of this conversation. This conversation is responding to what was the story you were given me, Bob, by Elizabeth and by others, either directly or inferentially by the way they referred to Nellie as I recall it. Whether that was misinformed doesn't really matter to me right now because the story that I always got was that Nellie was a 100% Indian, she was an Indian child that had been bound out, and that Ora had taken advantage of the system that allowed that to happen. And then began to make night time visits, and so forth. All of which, at least the older children, were aware of.

And I'm not rejecting that story - remember, I'm the guy who said I would make a book or make a movie out of Nellie. It is, and I know there are alternative paths that may be closer to the truth, but this is the way I always got the story.

(10:00)

Frankly, this is one of the facts about Nellie about which I have never heard any uncertainty simply a matter of fact referencing her as Native American. That's really the message that I... whether it's right or not, we all understand these things can take root and become absolute lore that everybody will swear to and then it turns out it's not true. But the way I got it, there was never any doubt that Nellie came in the Ora's and his family's sway which she was quite young and probably 7 or 8 and that she came through the system and was identified as a Native American girl.

Now, the next thing I said in the letter is we really should find a way to talk this through. For example, I've never heard of this business about Nellie going on to a career in nursing. My version of the story was that she died probably as a result of the birth of the child with which Ora had impregnated her. But this stuff that you mentioned about her going off and getting nursing training (I think I recall that). That doesn't seem consistent with her probable role at the time and her age at the time. Let me go back to my writing.

(13:00)

The story was that Nellie died from either the effort of childbirth from bearing Ora's child or contracted flu, or some other hospital related disease, or any of the many childbirth diseases that were prevalent at the time and died in the hospital shortly after the birth of the child. That's the way I got it. Now, there was always a kind of a silent pause, as I recall it, when that part of the story was repeated and I always wondered, I always said to myself, did the doctors simply decide to let Nellie die as a result of the birth of this child. And it is not inconsistent with the practice of medicine as it existed in the late 19th century. Doctors really considered themselves to be in charge of the life of their patients and although euthanasia was certainly not something

that anyone would ever admit occurred, it did occur, and people were allowed to die when the doctors thought probably everyone would be better off if they were dead.

And I always speculated about whether or not that was the source of Nellie's fatal experience. But of course, that assumes that Nellie died within earshot of the birth of that baby and I am perfectly open to the possibility that that isn't the way it happened. Now, as my letter goes on, yes, Ora was forced by public pressure from Hinsdale town fathers to marry Nellie and that marriage is a matter of record. But Nellie's death as it was told... But Nellie's death, as I was told the story, ended that chapter, although Ora and some of his family was forced to leave Hinsdale to reside in Buffalo where Ora continued to develop his attachment to the Russelite movement, actually managing marrying – and I wonder if you know this – do you know about Marie?

Steve: Yes

I actually met Marie. Marie was still alive in the early 1940s. She came and visited my mother who, with my father and I, were living in Brooklyn at the time. And Marie came down, she was one of those Russelites that Ora hooked up with and married. She was definitely Ora's either third or fourth wife. So anyway, you know about her.

Steve: Yes.

She was still alive when I was born in Brooklyn when she visited us as I recall, with much to the displeasure of my mother. She didn't buy Marie's religious take on things. My mother was no Russelite and she didn't much care for Marie herself because she always felt that Marie had just captured papa, that she had forced him into a marriage on the basis of their common interest in Russelite affairs. There was definitely, even to – I must have been 6 or 7 years old at the time – that I could see that and it is very much in memory that my mother didn't think this woman was very nice.

Unless Ora was a bigamist and Nellie did hold for a long time after the birth of that child, Nellie passed pretty quickly out of the picture in the life parade. Which suggests to me that she did die in the hospital and didn't go on to take nurse training and do the other things that you mentioned. But I've been wronger about easier things. I'm going to quit because I'm at the end of what I had to say which I have intentionally limited to the question of Nellie. Rosemary's been listening to this...

S: Thank you for sharing all of this...

I'm getting to an age where if I was going to do something like that, I'd damn well hurry up, but I make that joke all the time. Well, if I ever do write that story, it will be titled with Nellie's name because she is such an interesting central figure and just stop and think what it must have been like. And now, granted, we live in a different century, we in different times, and so forth. But you can't help but say that son of a bitch Ora and whatever could give a man such a sense of self and a sense of right and a sense of opportunity which he took advantage of. I mean, what a bastard, son of a bitch!

S: That explains a little bit about Nelson which then of course explains a little bit about Sue.

Well, you know, there is all of that to play with. And each of us has his own little slice of it. I, in the form of my mother and her view... my mother knew what was going on.

(22:00)

[Steve describes the sequence of historical events]

(30:00)

That's fascinating. That's just... I .. you can imagine I'm sitting here having my mind changed in some degree, and I'm... (laughing).

Steve: Unless the women of Hinsdale, in the year 1920, were whitewashing their feelings about Nellie and what was going on here, my sense is, according to the veneer of the newspaper articles, was they really liked Nellie. And that Nellie was a part of the community because she had visited Hinsdale a number of times over the years after she had graduated from nursing school for both visits and for doing nursing work with residents of Hinsdale.

(32:25)

You know, you make a case that's hard to refute because you have the kinds of data - newspaper articles, the announcement of events, that nobody's going to ... that stuff bears a lot of weight in the questions that you're trying to answer about Nellie. I am reeling from the loss of the certainty that I went with for so many years that Nellie just died and was out of the picture right away. And that my mother cared for the baby that she bore to Ora and then the baby died. That was the way I always got that story ... always got that story.

S: I can tell you the exact date that Ora Jay died if you give me one minute... continue. Ora Jay was born on June 18, 1923 and he died August 20, 1923, so he lived for two months and two days.

That's about right, and during that period of life, my mother cared for him. They were living in Buffalo at that time but I'm not sure about that.

S: What did Ora Jay die of?

My comfort with lore that my mother passed on, and I think I recall accurately, and the story about the death of that baby is not inconsistent with what you've just said but I had the impression that it was a lot shorter period of time. My mother got the hell out of there as fast as she could, in my opinion. She went to Normal School and she got a job down on Long Island teaching school and for her to do that was the equivalent of her going to Hong Kong or something like that. She was just signaling in my opinion, that she was cutting all the ties with that Hinsdale and Buffalo crowd that she had enough. And she spoke not bitterly, but a little bit resentfully about that baby, that about Ora's baby. She would refer to that baby, "That was a bad baby, that baby was just not never gonna survive." Now I don't know what...

S: Was it premature? Nellie was in her late 30s when that baby was born.

That's so... I just really have to think about that. I just can't... I mean, I see it, but it's such... you know, the story of Nellie in my mind rightly or wrongly and it's beginning to look increasingly wrongly, is that Nellie died along with, in effect, the sinful product of her and Ora's dalliance, and that was the end of it. Nellie was dead, the baby was dead, and Ora went on with his next woman, Marie.

S: Nellie died on June 29th, and the baby was born on June 18th, so that means Nellie died 11 days after the baby was born. And then on August 20th, the baby died.

That is consistent with the way my mother told the story. Nellie was gone and she was left to take care of that baby and she always referred to it, never by name. Always as "that baby." And it being a "bad baby, that baby was never going to survive." I don't know whether she ever got blamed for not taking good care of the baby by somebody or what, but I do have a very strong recollection of a nearly resentful Elizabeth saying, almost in effect, "It wasn't my fault, You know, I did my job. They told me I had to take care of that baby, so I took care of the baby. It was a bad baby."

Anyway, I'm losing my battery on my phone so it's really at the point where I can barely hear and understand. Obviously we have to continue this in some way. I can't wait to see some of the stuff that you've put together because I don't have any of that stuff. And I don't think I have seen any of that stuff either in the lore or non-sequentially a piece here or there or organized in some coherent fashion which you appear to have done. Let's suspend right now because this phone is just about shot and let's figure out who's got what and I will not talk so absolutely as I did about when and how Nellie died, and I just need...

I'd love to see some of the stuff that you've got. You've been blowing me away with some of the stuff you just came up with today. It is overwhelmingly convincing and requires me to rewind my clock and rewind my storybook. This is not so easy for an old guy to do because as you can tell from the way I wrote to you, there was just amazement in my mind that you could get it so wrong. Apparently that shoe is on my foot a little more certainly than it is on yours. Let me digest this a little bit and let's find a way to spend a little more time together because even if it is only for me to straighten out the Nellie thing and determine the sequence of events, I'd just like to have that straight.

And the idea that Nellie had a life after Ora, it completely changes the way – and good for her that she did - and that's a much happier, much more victorious outcome for Nellie than I thought had occurred. I thought Nellie was beaten by the lecherous old man and that she would end up dying, shamed and childless. And Ora went on to his next conquest. Not quite that dramatic, but if there's a person that I have resented for – and you gotta be careful because those were different times and men had different standards against which they were measured primarily, you have to be real careful when you're looking back not to be judgemental of times that produced decisions that you wouldn't make now. That's a big mistake.

S: One of the possibilities in all of this with respect to all of this - it is possible that the community of Hinsdale saw what Ora was doing for Nellie as an improvement of Nellie's situation. And that by being involved in the Witter family, they were elevating the status of Native Americans into

something more respectable and Christian. And that over time it is possible that it was perceived that Ora marrying Nellie was taking that even a step further up in the sense that now the white guy is elevating the status of someone who would otherwise be considered a second class citizen by marrying them into the white man's culture.

Bob: That is entirely possible.

Steve: It's an oversimplification of the situation...

Bob: Yes, but I get you, I get you. And it is entirely possible. You know there's a... I was teasing my Christopher just a week ago with one of my favorite sayings and I kind of upset him, the saying is, "Was you there, Charlie?" If you can't answer "yes" to that question, then be careful how adamant you are about your opinions "...unless you was there Charlie." And to be there means to be there not just physically but as a product of those times and the values of those times. And that's one of the trickiest things, you know. I'm a history teacher by trade before I became a lawyer and one thing I've learned is that it's really tough to put yourself in the place of another time. And a hundred years is enough to make a big big difference the way we see things and the way they were seeing them. So the possibility of that being one of the factors is, of course, is something you have to consider.

Steve: I'm going to tie this up, and in the meantime I'm going to assemble a chronology of everything big and small that I can provide to you to give you a visual reference for what I've just described to you.

Bob: I apologize, I'm losing you.

Steve: OK, we'll meet again soon.

I think that's the right way to say it. When my telephone gets better, I sure would like to continue this. I don't feel satisfied. I'm complimented that you're willing to spend some time and you obviously have some assets that I don't even comprehend because I'm barely barely computer - I won't even say astute because I am not astute. I have a computer, I don't use it well, and I am accursedly of my age which is increasingly increasing, and that's good, that's fine considering the alternative. But I'm just, I'm not adept in the skills that exist these days and it frustrates me, it really does. But this is a fascinating topic to me also. Don't hesitate to communicate with me and I will try to polish up a few questions that I'd like to ask you, as a fair way to leave it?

Steve: Yes. I would love to hear more about my mother (Sue Witter) as a young girl and a teenager prior to her moving to Chicago.

Bob: Yeah, and everything. I'm willing to talk (about) that and you know I was in love with your mother from the first time I first met her in Buffalo in that house they lived in, I think I was 4 or 5 years old. Yes. Thanks very much for your time and your system access and we'll carry this forward one way or the other. Feel free on your end, and I'll feel free on my end.

Angela Thompson (Robinson) - Ora & Marie

Transcript of Angela's Facebook post, 2012

Ora met up with a very sophisticated woman named Marie. She was a real high society lady, wearing the latest styles, hairdos and makeup. To my grandma and her siblings she was not mother material at all.

They again were appalled by their father's choice in women after their own sweet mama. My mom remembers being required to call her "Grandma Marie" once they were married, but Marie never fit into the family, although she and Ora were together for a good number of years.

Maria continued her active social life, her bright makeup and general flamboyance seeming to make a lasting impression on her stepchildren. At some point, after the children were all grown, Ora and Marie came under the influence of a Bible teacher named Charles Russell. I don't recall whether they knew Mr. Russell personally or were just drawn into a group associated with him. Ora had never been particularly interested in spiritual matters - certainly had not raised his family in the Christian faith - but the Russellites, as the group members were called, had some interesting and convincing prophetic ideas about the end of the world and about Bible interpretation and began withdrawing from mainstream society, convinced they finally had the true truth!

Ora and Marie were swept along, having neither any reason to contradict, nor knowledge with which to counteract what they were being persuaded to accept and believe. Soon the movement gave themselves a real name - Jehovah's Witnesses - and Ora and Marie were in.

Ora and Marie got more and more involved in the new teaching of the JW's. Eventually there was a prediction that the "End" was soon approaching and that the true believers needed to gather together to find a safe place to hide and survive until the soon return of Christ. Their group somehow decided to go to the mountains in Georgia. I can't remember why, so far from their NY State area.

Anyway, a remote property up in the hills was purchased and a large mansion-like dwelling was designed to accommodate the whole group including children. I think Ora and Marie were among the first to arrive there. Building commenced. Land was cleared for massive gardens and presumably farm animals. They kept contact with the church leaders. The building project went slowly. The mansion was not even close to being finished when a predicted date for Christ's return came - and went.

The disillusioned group quickly dwindled until Ora and Marie, who had invested so much time and money into the dream, were the only ones left. Years passed and Ora's children heard little from him. Eventually, they heard that he had passed away. His body was brought back to Hinsdale. More years passed. Nothing was heard from Marie.

My Grandpa and Grandma (Marjorie and Miner Scott) who often travelled in the summer, decided to try to find Marie. They went to the town closest to where the mountaintop refuge was supposed to be and inquired about Marie Witter. Someone had an idea of the place and gave some very sketchy directions. Grandpa and Grandma wound their way far out into the country and up, up into the hills. They finally saw a building. It was like a huge two-story tar-papered shack with big bay windows. It was overgrown with a tangle of trees and shrubs and weeds. It looked totally uninhabited.

They got out of the car and thought they would look around. As they came around the back of the house, they saw what appeared to be a cultivated vegetable garden. Surprised, they came toward the plot and suddenly a figure rose up, startled, from a squatting position from among the greenery and cried out in fear. It was an old, bent over woman, haggard, with bedraggled long gray hair and utterly filthy. Grandma (Marjorie) could only describe her as looking like a storybook "witch". It was, unbelievably, Marie! Unrecognizable!

After she and they recovered somewhat from the mutual shock, she told them she and Ora had kept the faith and had waited all this time for the Day that had been promised. She was still waiting. She was clearly deranged. Grandma and Grandpa went inside the house and saw a cavernous structure with still-exposed studs, beams, etc. - totally unfinished - what obviously could have been an amazing mansion. Someone had occasionally been bringing Marie some bare necessities while she subsisted on her garden. Grandma and Grandpa could scarcely believe this was the uppity high-society Marie they had last seen. I don't know if they ever heard anything about her after that, but Grandma sure had a story to tell to her grandchildren.

Transcripts of various emails, 2020-2021

Angela Thomson (Robinson) responding to Tim Robinson, August 29, 2020

Hi Annih,

You wrote:

> We've known half-native people who looked very native and others had less native features. Nellie has dark hair and very dark eyes which would fit.

> I'd say Nellie could have been part (maybe not half) Indian and looked like that. Grandma S [Marjorie Scott] always described her as a part Indian foster child, so why not accept that?

Just trying to get something more confirmed about the Indian part than 'everybody was saying'.

> I'm surprised that she seems to have been in Nurses' Training. She must have been older than I had imagined her to be. I thought she was still helping in the home when she married

Ora. A lot got conflated, it seems. She was an RN and supported herself by private nursing a la Belle Langworthy. She nursed Belle Witter in her 1918 final illness, and the lot of them when the flu epidemic hit in 1919, taking out Annabelle. She apparently contracted a severe case herself. > BTW, which baby was Grandma nursing when Ora and Nellie's baby was given to her to nurse since she had milk? Thelma, Annabelle?

> We'd know if we have Nellie's date of death. It's sad to see her picture, actually.

1923.

> Do you also have pics of Marie, the third wife?

A couple.

>

Thanks for the heritage opinion! Keep an eye on the Marjorie Witter page- there's a LOT more to come!

Timmih

September 2, 2020. Angela responding to Steve Covello

Here is something you can add to the story - a part that my grandmother (Marjorie) recounted many times to me even up into my adulthood, with details increasing as I got older and could ask more personal questions .

Yes, 18-yr-old Elizabeth was the obvious one to care for the baby since she was still at home - totally overwhelming for her considering her age and the stressful situation. However, her nearby sister, Marjorie, had just had baby David a few months prior, so it seemed expedient to bring baby Ora to her to nurse. Marjorie said it was a terrible situation with her conflicting emotions: she abhorred the origins of this new child; she was attached to her own precious son. But with her innate sense of integrity in the face of a helpless, innocent newborn baby (her own brother!) needing sustenance and the fact of her present ability to produce milk, she perfunctorily put baby Ora to her breast, doing what was morally right, but neither felt nor showed any tenderness toward him. She became emotional every time she told this part of the story, confessing that she very much begrudged sharing David's milk, and was quite sure Ora could have survived if anyone had wanted him to.

My older siblings probably all heard this part of the story from our grandmother and I am confident they would all remember it the same as grandma told it the same every time.

[Steve provided factual details about Nellie, to which she responds below]

But I'll say something about the entirely different story I now have about Nellie than what I had always assumed based on very minimal background details Grandma (Marjorie) had revealed. I only understood that Nellie was a part-Indian foster girl that came and lived at their house when they were kids. (It seemed as though Grandma remembered when Nellie had come to help

around the house and with the small children since the mother was not strong.) I had no idea that Nellie was still quite a small child herself when she came.

What I had never known was that Nellie came into the home before Anna Belle had any children at all. She was an 8 or 9-yr-old girl, already there when Marjorie was born. It appears that only Marjorie, Marian and Lewis would remember her living with them as a "sister" in the family home. Now I see that she may have been around and helped but was not living there when all the other children were born.

Grandma didn't tell me that Nellie left at 15 and then grew up, moved back to her home state, became a nurse and returned periodically as an adult to help family members in times of need and that Grandma herself had been quite willingly under her nursing care at least twice as an adult.

My picture has always been that when Anne Belle died, Nellie was still living there and shortly thereafter married Ora while she was still quite young, soon had a baby and both died. End of story! I'm very glad to get the bigger, more interesting picture now.

One other thing. Tim mentions Marjorie's baby girl Anna Belle being "taken out" by the Spanish flu in 1919. This may be in reality true, but this is what Grandma recounted many times about the death of baby Anne Belle. I don't ever recall her mentioning it happening in connection with the family having Spanish flu. And she certainly never mentioned that Nellie was involved with them at that time. (As I mentioned above, she never told me anything about Nellie after her marriage to Ora and the death of the baby.)

What she told me (us?) was simple. Anna Belle was a sickly child from the beginning. Although Marjorie adored her and gave her a lot of attention, she had many illnesses and finally without any specific diagnosis, she passed away. The doctors could only explain that it was "failure to thrive". Again, in telling it, Grandma would become emotional. She'd tell us, "My arms ached for a long time." She had lost both her beloved mother and her baby within about 1 year.

It's shocking to realize now that my own mom, Thelma, was under the care of Nellie when she was 4 years old and later at 7 yrs old when Nellie came to help with baby brother, David. My mom, who also loved to tell her childhood stories, never told me that she actually remembered Nellie. At least I think I would have remembered that if she'd mentioned it.

I also have memories of Marjorie's version of Ora and Marie's story. You probably have an expanded version!

Response from Tim Robinson Oct 2, 2020:

I just can't see Nellie being a live-in big sister with Marjorie and the rest and not have her a player in all Marjorie's recollections. She's just not part of the recollections, for the most part. I conclude that either she was soon gone, or got erased. Memories can be like that - think '1984'. Fall from grace, and poof, you vanish from the stories. At 9 years older, they wouldn't have had

much in common. I don't recall many interactions with my oldest siblings, 9+ years older than me.

Roxanne Labby August 20, 2020:

Hello Cousin Steve,

How nice that you are taking on the job of family historian. Yes, I would love to have you send any information and pictures my way. I am always interested in the family history. I would say that I am not a great resource for information, unfortunately.

I do have my distant memories of Marjorie's stories. I think you already know most of those. I am ruefully short of pictures, and certainly never have seen a picture of Nellie. I think that Marjorie only presented her Witter family in the most glowing terms. I certainly have never heard this story of Nellie's background. I only heard her described as the nurse that cared for Belle, and her subsequent marriage to Ora. And of course the death of not only her, but her poor baby. Never a word was uttered about her being Indian.

I think that I am disturbed by her whole story. It seems they treated her as though she were a slave. How terrible. I can see why Marjorie would leave that part out. At any rate. I am glad to actually know the rest of the story. I would say that in terms of what tribe she came from, that Blackfeet Indians were nowhere near Cattaraugus County. Most likely she was actually a Seneca Indian, whose reservation includes Salamanca NY. So if you are looking for Indian records, you might look there.

I hope your carpal tunnel resolves. Thanks for all of your efforts on behalf of the family history. It is a lot of work. One resource that you probably already know about is a facebook page dedicated to Marjorie Scott. It has pictures and videos and stories about Marjorie. I have friended her, but it has been set up by Thelma's children. You might look there and of course become her friend, haha. Hope all is well with you in these turbulent times. Stay safe, Your cousin Roxie

Angela Thomson <angelathomson687@gmail.com>

Attachments

Fri, Sep 4, 2020, 11:07 PM

to me

Hi Steve,

Here is "My recollection of Grandma Scott's story of Ora and Marie" . I wrote this for Brenda Witter 8 years ago as a private FB message. (Thus the blue background).

I have written only details that Grandma actually told me. I don't remember any other details about them.

Angela

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Ora had never been particularly interested in spiritual matters--certainly had not raised his family in the Christian faith [editor's note: this is incorrect] but the Russellites, as the group members were called, had some interesting and convincing prophetic ideas about the end of the world and about Bible interpretation and began withdrawing from mainstream society, convinced they finally had the true truth!

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March 18, 2021 email

Mary Ellen, Mina Witter's daughter, shared a few recollections today

Tim Robinson: Your mom was one of the Witter siblings that were still at home when Belle Witter died in 1918. And then she got a stepmother and then she got uprooted and moved off to Buffalo at age 12. She'd have been something like 15 when Stepmom Nellie died after childbirth.

Did she ever complain about all that or have an opinion? Apparently Aunt Elizabeth felt ill-treated somehow, and Nelson and Leslie bagged any respect for religion over grandpa Ora's over-the-top religiosity. What was your mother's take?

Mary Ellen: She really never complained, but told me that Elizabeth did and it bothered her because she claimed that it was she who did all or most of the housework and cooking for Nelson and Ora because Elizabeth was in Normal School to become a teacher. My mother graduated from high school when she was only 15, having skipped at least 2 grades. So she was the only one at home during the day. I guess even the care of Nellie's baby fell to her. She only complained that Elizabeth didn't think she should have to do more. That might explain why she went out to Cowlesville to be a live-in nanny when she was just 16 and then married my dad the next year. I always thought he sort of saved her from having to deal with Ora and the gang.

Tim: Thanks! That's a useful perspective. So she graduated in 1925 and married in 1926. Wow. I've sent you an email with a couple of newspaper clippings about her stay with Marjorie and Miner in Hinsdale Aug1925-Feb1926. And Marjorie's assessment of her and Elizabeth's relative personalities.